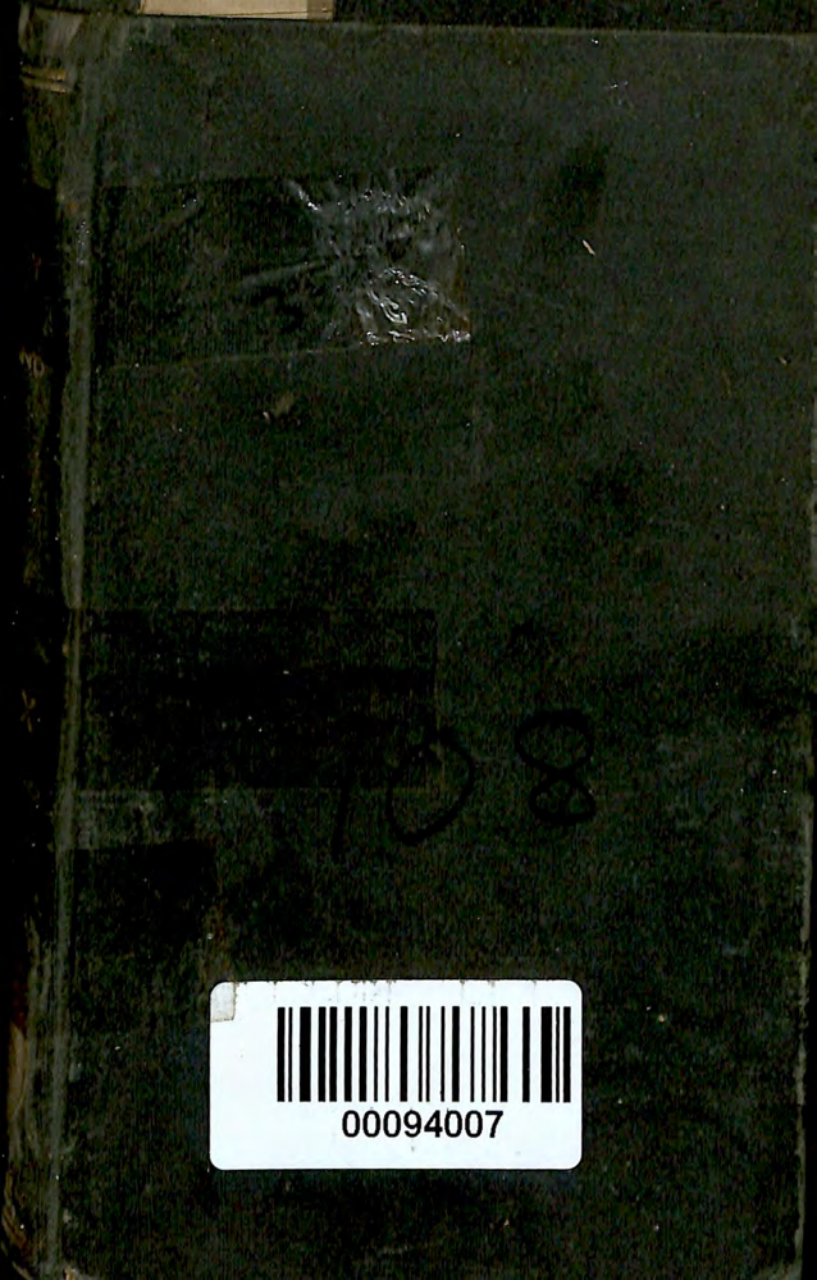
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EMINENT LITERARY AND SCIENTIFIC MEN.

History.

ENGLAND.

BY THE

RIGHT HON. SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH,

AND THE LATE

WILLIAM WALLACE, ESQ.

CONTINUED BY

ROBERT BELL, ESQ.

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The

HISTORY of ENGLAND,

BY

The Right Honorable

SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH, L.L.D.

and the late William Wallace Esq.r

CONTINUED

By Robert Bell Esq.r

VOLUME THE TENTH.

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HISTORY

OF

ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

1714—1716.

ACCESSION OF GEORGE I. — STATE OF PARTIES. — ASCENDENCY OF THE WHIGS. — GERMAN PREDILECTIONS OF THE KING. — SETTLEMENT OF THE COURT AND CIVIL LIST. — NEW PARLIAMENT SUMMONED. — CORONATION SERMON. — STORMY DISCUSSION ON THE PEACE OF UTRECHT.—SEIZURE OF THE PAPERS OF THE NEGOTIATORS. — REPORT OF THE SECRET COMMITTEE. — IMPEACHMENT OF BOLINGBROKE, OXFORD, ORMOND, AND STRAFFORD. — FLIGHT OF BOLINGBROKE AND ORMOND TO FRANCE. — BILLS OF ATTAINDER FOUND AGAINST THEM. — OXFORD COMMITTED TO THE TOWER. — TUMULTS IN LONDON. — ARREST OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMONS. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION. — DEATHS OF BURNET, WHARTON, AND HALIFAX. — THE EARL OF MAR'S REBELLION. — DEMONSTRATIONS IN THE NORTH. — SURRENDER OF PRESTON. — BATTLE OF DUNBLANE. — APPEARANCE OF THE PRETENDER IN SCOTLAND.—HIS TOTAL DISCOMFITURE AND FLIGHT.—HIS ILL LUCK CONTRASTED WITH THE GOOD FORTUNE OF THE KING. — IMPEACHMENT AND EXECUTION OF THE REBEL LORDS.

GEORGE I. was called to the throne of England with every prepossession against him except the paramount one of religion. He was in the fifty-fifth year of his

age, with the habits of a petty sovereign governing by his will and pleasure — a stranger to the language *, manners, laws, and liberties of the English people. He left his wife behind him shut up in a tower †, and he brought over at his side that common state symbol of

* See lady M. W. Montagu's humorous account of the court of George I. The fact of his majesty's ignorance of the English language was frequently alluded to even in parliament. Shippen, one of the most inflexible patriots of the time, observed, in a debate on the army estimates,— "It is the infelicity of his majesty's reign, that he is unacquainted with our language and constitution." "He could speak no English," says lady Mary W. Montagu, "and was past the age of learning it. Our customs and laws were all mysteries to him, which he neither tried to understand, nor was capable of understanding if he endeavoured it."

† The story or the mystery of Sophia Dorothea, the unfortunate wife of George I., and her lover, count Koningsmark (see his trial for the assassination of Mr. Thynne, and the iniquitous screening of his guilt, in the State Trials, vol. ix.), has been often mentioned and canvassed in print. She was the daughter of the duke and duchess of Zell, who obliged her to marry George, then electoral prince. Koningsmark took advantage of the husband's temporary absence to be admitted to her chamber, on leaving which he was seized and strangled by assassins posted in the antechamber for the purpose. His body, according to some (Lemontey, Histoire de la Régence), was burned in an oven — according to others (Coxe's Walpole and Horace Walpole's Reminiscences), was buried, and afterwards discovered by workmen making repairs under the floor of the unfortunate princess's dressing-room. Shut up in the castle of Alden, she constantly protested her innocence of all but allowing him to take a final leave of her, and was believed by many. It was further said (Coxe's Walpole) that the countess Platen, her father-in-law's mistress (the father and son had their mistresses installed under the same roof with their wives in this mordi family), loved Koningsmark, was slighted by him, and out of jealous spite introduced him without the consent of the princess in order to ruin both. She lived thirty-two years in her confinement, and died only a few months before her husband. A French prophetess warned him "to take care of his wife, as he would not survive her a year;" and Horace Walpole, who tells the story, insinuates that the oracle was dictated by the duke and duchess of Zell to prevent foul practices upon her life. Such was the uncompromising firmness with which she asserted her innocence, that it is said, when her husband made her an offer of reconciliation (see Coxe's Walpole), she replied, "If what I am accused of is true, I am unworthy of his bed; and if my accusation is false, he is unworthy of me. I will not accept his offer." Her purity is certainly not established by a magnanimous answer of this description, which might quite as readily be made by a woman guilty of the immorality attributed to her; but there is no doubt that many individuals believed the charge to be false, and amongst the rest, her son George II., who was so passionately attached to her that he once made an attempt to visit her, crossing the Aller on horseback, opposite the castle, for that purpose, but was prevented from seeing her by the vigilance of baron Bulow, to whose charge she was committed. It was his intention, had she survived his accession, to acknowledge her as queen-dowager, and he always kept her portrait secretly in his possession. On the morning after the news of the death of George I. reached London, Mrs. Howard discovered in the antechamber of the king's apartment a picture of a woman in the electoral robes, which proved to be that of Sophia. It is but charitable on the whole to observe, that, if she really was guilty, the censures of the world ought to fall heavily on her husband and his father, who, in their own palace, set such a demoralising example of open infamy.

despotism and depravity in the minor German courts, a reigning mistress.*

The news of the queen's death and his accession reached him on the 5th of August. He remained in Hanover till the 31st, loitered on his way in Holland, where he was joined by lord Townshend, and landed at Greenwich on the evening of the 18th of September. This lapse of six weeks is not accounted for. Was it distaste for his new greatness?—or the more probable fear of having to dispute it, on his arrival, with jacobitism and the pretender?

It would appear that he had neither to apprehend. All parties—tories and jacobites no less than whigs—crouched for employment on the morning of the 19th, at the first levee of the new king. Ormond, Oxford, Harcourt, Trevor, were ungraciously repelled by him. Oxford, if his enemy Bolingbroke may be relied on, was treated with "distinguishing contempt."† Bolingbroke alone, of the late queen's ministers, did not present himself. He continued to hold the seals as secretary for a few years after her death; and the whig council of regency, indulging the malice of little minds to superior ones, subjected him to every mortification,

* Schiller has exhibited the heartless tyranny and immorality of those courts in his play of "Cabal and Love." George I. brought over not only the baroness Schulenberg, the chief sultana—whom he created duchess of Kendall, and whom he is said to have espoused with his left hand, a species of marriage not uncommon in Germany—but madame Kilmassegge, sister to the countess of Platen, his father's mistress, whom he made countess of Darlington: neither did credit to his taste. They were both rapacious, and would have committed any corrupt act for money. Of the former—whose share in Wood's patent rendered her notorious—sir Robert Walpole used to say she was so venal a creature that she would have sold the king's honour for a shilling advance to the highest bidder. She was a coarse and inelegant person. The countess of Darlington was a woman of great beauty, but latterly became extremely corpulent. In the last year or two of his life, George I. had another mistress, Miss Anne Brett, daughter, by colonel Brett, of the celebrated divorced countess of Macclesfield, the heartless mother of Savage the poet. Miss Brett used to live openly in the palace; and, if the king had returned from Hanover, would have been made a countess. It is only surprising the nobility did not resent these frequent invasions of their order in the persons of the mistresses of royalty. To have administered to the criminal desires of the sovereign, at once established a claim to a title; and one might think that titles thus earned would be a mark of disgrace rather than honour. But we must not examine too closely the roots of the aristocracy. Time, it appears, sanctifies an inheritance which is often thus infamous in its origin.

† Letter to sir W. Windham.

—such as that of waiting with his official papers at the door. An order of the king from Hanover soon relieved him, and the papers in his office were seized. This order appears to have been the only notice taken of a well-turned letter of compliment and homage addressed by him to George I., in French, under the date of August 3d, from Whitehall.*

The new sovereign gave his confidence exclusively and ostentatiously to the whigs. He appointed lord Halifax first commissioner of the treasury; Townshend and Stanhope, secretaries; Cowper, chancellor; Wharton, privy seal; Sunderland, lord lieutenant of Ireland; Argyle, commander of the forces in Scotland; Oxford, first lord of the admiralty; Devonshire, lord steward; Somerset, master of the horse; Walpole, paymaster of the forces, with the ministerial lead in the house of commons; Marlborough was reinstated as commander-in-chief, but with the shadow only of his former power; Shrewsbury, a sort of hybrid politician, was continued in his office of lord chamberlain; Nottingham had expiated his toryism by what the whigs called his secession, the tories, his apostacy from the late administration, and was made president of the council; Somers obtained a seat in the cabinet without office, which it is said his age and infirmities obliged him to decline.

The ascendant of the whigs in the court and ministry was complete, and George I. is reproached with governing by a party or a faction. This censure is unjust. The men who secured his succession were the most likely to maintain his throne; and king William, who could sway the courts and counsels of allied Europe, failed in the attempt to combine or balance English parties in his government.

The tories had no right to look for court favour or a share in the ministry, but they had a right to security and repose, which George I. would have given them

* See his Corr. *sub an.* 1714, and the additions, and prefixed to the edition of his works, 1809.

were he generous or prudent. He lent himself to the vindictive proscription of the tories by the whigs, and these whigs in return lent themselves to his dominant passion for the interests of Hanover.

William III. ruled England as stadtholder, George I. as elector; but William's policy was European when it ceased to be English — George's was that of a German princeling embroiling England with foreign states on such alien and petty issues as the annexation of Bremen and Verden to the electorate of Hanover.* In such a reign there is little to detain the reader or the writer. It has been aptly described as no more than the prœm to the history of England under the house of Brunswick.†

The appointment of the king's court and government having been completed, his coronation took place on the 20th of October. The last parliament of the late queen, met under the regency, on the 5th of August, congratulated the new king, took various measures to secure his succession, among others that of setting a price of 100,000*l.* upon the head of the pretender if he should attempt a landing — settled on the king a civil list of 700,000*l.* a year‡ — provided for the payment of arrears claimed by the troops of Hanover in the late war§ — was prorogued on the 25th of August, and dissolved by proclamation on the 5th of January. 1715.

* The partisans of the king, conscious that his majesty was vulnerable to the charge of bringing German predilections to the throne of England, endeavoured to turn the circumstance to advantage by asserting that he had governed Hanover on principles agreeable to the English constitution. "His majesty gave a proof of his sovereign virtues," says Addison, "before he came to the exercise of them in this kingdom. His inclination to justice led him to rule his German subjects in the same manner that our constitution directs him to govern the English!" and by this shallow sophistry the compromise of the national honour, in schemes for the aggrandisement of Hanover, was attempted to be concealed.

† Walpole's Reminiscences.

‡ The tories, from party artifice or interested servility, proposed to make it a million, but were overruled by the whigs.

§ The Hanoverian and other German mercenaries in the queen's pay disobeyed the orders, and withdrew from the command of the duke of Ormond at the close of the campaign preceding the peace of Utrecht; and Bolingbroke, after stigmatising their desertion with indignant contempt (see last volume, p. 281. note), refused to pay them the arrears which they demanded. This alone would have sufficed to provoke the personal enmity of George I.

A second proclamation summoning a new parliament was issued on the 15th. It closed with the king's desire, that his "loving subjects would have a particular regard to such as showed a firmness to the protestant succession when it was in danger*," that is, the opponents of the late ministry; and a whig parliament was duly returned.

The tories, meanwhile, had notice, by some ominous murmurs, of the coming storm. The bishop of Oxford, preaching the coronation sermon, denounced the peace of Utrecht, and said the king could not have ascended the throne peaceably, if the queen's death had not taken them by surprise. It has been shown† that no one step was taken to restore the pretender, and that the queen's life had been most precarious for several months. But party rhetoric is never less scrupulous then when uttered by lips professedly consecrated to truth.‡ At the same time several constituencies, including that of London, instructed their representatives to inquire by whose counsel the late queen was induced to treat separately with France.

The first parliament returned under the house of Hanover met on the 17th of March. Mr. Spencer

* See Parl. Hist. vii. 25. † See last volume *ad finem.*

‡ Even the pretender's idle manifesto, asserting his hereditary right, was not known to the bishop, for, though dated August 29th, it did not reach England till November. (See Parl. Hist. vii. 21, 22.) It is true that some jacobite pamphlets were circulated during the elections—among others, entitled "English Advice to English Freeholders," for the discovery of the author or printer of which the government offered in vain a reward of 1000*l.* It was ascribed to bishop Atterbury, and was not unworthy of his jacobitism and talent. Whig historians allude to it as a "traitorous libel," full of malice and falsehood against the king's person and family. The curious reader who may wish to know what was a "traitorous libel" in those days, can refer to it in Somers's Tracts, vol. xiii. In the only marked allusion to "the king's person and family," there may be malice, but certainly there is no falsehood. The writer, justifying the duke of Ormond's obedience to the queen's "restraining orders," puts the case, "Suppose general Bulow had remained with the English general contrary to the elector's command, or at least without his leave, what reward do you think he would have found upon his return home? I dare answer for it, such a one as count Koningsmark."

The jacobite clergy were as unscrupulous as the whig bishop, and laboured in their vineyard with such fearless zeal as to draw from the king an order (Gazette, Dec. 11. 1714,) forbidding the clergy to meddle with affairs of state in their sermons, &c. What outcry to this day against a similar order of James II., whilst that of George I. is never mentioned!

Compton was chosen speaker, and the session was opened in person by the king. George I., from indifference or incapacity, had not taken the trouble to acquire the slightest knowledge of the English language.* He was taught to articulate by rote, "My lords and gentlemen, I have ordered my lord chancellor to declare to you, in my name and words, the causes of calling this parliament;" and having done so, placed a written speech in the hands of the chancellor, by whom it was accordingly read. The king in his proclamation summoning his first parliament, contented himself with saying, it had pleased "Almighty God, by most remarkable steps of his providence, to bring him safe to the crown of *this kingdom*:" in his speech from the throne he said, "it had pleased Almighty God to call him to the throne of *his ancestors*." The elector of Hanover had just as much right to talk of the throne of his ancestors as lord Pembroke would have had were he the "block chosen to be carved into a king," according to the jesting proposal of Sunderland or Devonshire; and it is the boast of whig writers that the revolution and the act of settlement, based monarchy in England upon a parliamentary, not a hereditary title. This parliamentary basis of the whigs is frankly asserted only in books and declamations, never in any act or document of constitutional record; and here, in the first Brunswick speech from the throne, is negatived by implication, as on previous occasions it was shrouded in verbal casuistry and quibble.

The chief topics of the royal speech were a menacing censure of the peace of Utrecht, the pretender's manifesto†, and the residence of that personage in Lorraine.

* Horace Walpole states, that even after George I. had been some years king, when his father, sir Robert, was minister, the one being wholly ignorant of English, the other of German and French, the only medium of communication between them was a jargon of Latin. Walpole used to say, that during this reign he governed the kingdom by bad Latin. The minister's answer, however, in one instance, to one of the king's German counsellors, and in the king's presence, was plain and pure Latin—it was, "*mentiris impudentissime.*"

† The pretender in his manifesto, with an equal want of good sense and good feeling, set forth "the disappointment of his expectations on the

The tories on the accession of queen Anne made her talk from the throne of retrieving the national honour, an implied reflection on king William*; and the whigs now took occasion to retaliate. The lords, in their address, said "they had no doubt his majesty, with the aid of parliament, would recover the reputation of the kingdom in foreign parts." Bolingbroke opposed and moved to leave out this expression as injurious to the late queen. He was supported by Trevor, Strafford, Shrewsbury, Buckingham, Anglesea, and several bishops. On the other side, the chancellor Cowper, Wharton, Devonshire, with the tory deserters, Nottingham and Aylesbury, maintained that the words in question affected not the memory of the late queen, but the conduct of her ministers; and they were retained by a majority of sixty-six to thirty-three.

The commons, in their address, censured the peace of Utrecht in nearly the same terms as the royal speech; and, in reference to the pretender's manifesto, further engaged "to trace out those measures whereon he placed his hopes, and bring the authors of them to condign punishment." Shippen, Bromley, and Windham opposed, whilst Walpole, Stanhope, and Pulteney — the last now beginning his career as a party leader — defended the address, and it was carried by a majority of 244 to 138. Walpole talked openly of "exposing and punishing the late evil counsellors," and Stanhope said that, "though several papers had been abstracted from the secretaries' offices, there was enough to prove the late ministry the most corrupt that ever sate at the helm." † An impeachment was obviously in train, but was preceded by a passing interlude.

On the 5th of April, sir William Whitelocke, mem-

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death of his sister, the late queen, of whose good intentions towards him he could not well doubt," and by doing so, only armed the vengeance of the whigs against the tories and his partisans. Upon his coming to Paris on the queen's death, he was ordered back very unceremoniously by Torcy to Bar-le-Duc, and the French king expressly renounced him on the accession of king George.

* See last vol. p. 152.

† See Parl. Hist. vii. 48, &c.

ber for the university of Oxford, characterised the proclamation for summoning parliament as "unprecedented and unwarrantable." The king's recommendation of those "who had shown a firmness to the protestant succession when it was most in danger,"— that is, of court candidates,—was a clear interference with the freedom of election; but the whigs had the court, the government, and the majority; they called upon Whitelocke to explain, and he escaped by a craven apology. This did not deter sir William Windham: he said the proclamation was not only "unprecedented and unwarrantable," but "dangerous to the very being of parliaments." The courtiers called upon him to explain or prove his words; he re-asserted his opinion, claimed the freedom of debate, and a cry was raised "To the Tower!" "To the Tower!" Walpole artfully parried this extreme proceeding, and the result was a vote that Windham should be reprimanded by the speaker, for "a great indignity to his majesty, and a breach of the privilege of the house." He received the reprimand with an acknowledgment of the speaker's courtesy of manner; said "he had no thanks to return those, who, under pretence of lenity, had brought him under that censure;" and denied having done wrong.

When Walpole and Stanhope denounced the late ministry, they had already seized and examined the official papers not only of Bolingbroke, but of Strafford, one of the negotiators at Utrecht, and Prior, recently arrived from France; and on the 9th of April, a copied digest of them in fourteen volumes was laid by secretary Stanhope on the table of the house. The next step was to refer them to a secret committee of twenty-one chosen by ballot, which appointed Walpole chairman *, and entered upon its functions.

The committee of secrecy sat for some weeks without reporting, and the tories took heart. Shippen said, "that with all its menace and clamour it would end in

* Walpole was taken suddenly ill, and Stanhope was appointed in his place.

smoke."* He was sharply taken up by Boscawen, one of the committee, who said he could not endure the insolence of a certain set of men, guilty of the blackest crimes, yet having the assurance to dare the justice of the nation, — by Walpole, who said "he wanted words to express the villainy of the late Frenchified ministry," — by Stanhope, who wondered that men "guilty of such enormous crimes had the audacity to appear in the public streets." These violences ill became men professing themselves organs of public justice: they indicated, if any thing, party rancour and a bad case. This occurred on the 1st of June. On the 9th, Walpole announced that he had a report to present, and moved, by way of preliminary, that the speaker should issue his warrant for the arrest of certain persons whom he as chairman should name. The doors were locked, the gallery and avenues were cleared of strangers. Walpole gave in the names of several persons; and of these, two only, Prior and Harley, brother of lord Oxford, were apprehended. Walpole next brought up a report so voluminous, that the reading of it occupied him from one to six in the afternoon, together with an appendix, which he did not read. Hanmer moved the printing of the report, and a postponement from that day to the 21st of the month. It was replied by Walpole and Stanhope, in a tone of sarcastic taunt, that they who were so impatient of the slowness of the committee, should now be gratified by the expedition of its proceedings. They, accordingly, opposed all postponement, and carried their point by a majority of 280 to 160.

The report was twice read; first by the chairman of the committee, next by the clerk at the table; but still the house could not be supposed competent to decide whether or not it afforded grounds for an impeachment

* He was a thorough jacobite, of incorruptible integrity, the only man, according to Walpole, "who had not his price," and yet took all the oaths to the house of Hanover for a seat and the support of jacobitism in the house of commons. Such is the casuistry of party spirit and the passions, and thus futile and demoralising are test oaths. But in this, Shippen did no more than the whole party, who reconciled the contradiction to their consciences by a quibble.

of treason against the late ministers, yet this was averred by the reckless majority above stated, and Walpole began: — "I make no question," said he, "that after the report has been twice read, the whole house is fully convinced that Henry viscount Bolingbroke is guilty of high treason and other crimes and misdemeanours, and I impeach him accordingly. If any member has any thing to say in his behalf, I doubt not the house will hear him." After a deep silence of some minutes, two members, Hungerford and Ross, spoke briefly and faintly in his behalf, and a resolution to impeach him was carried. Lord Conningsby, who had played the part of a murderous bashaw as a lord justice in Ireland, next stood up. "The chairman," said he, "has impeached the hand — I the head; he the clerk — I the justice; he the scholar—I the master. I impeach Robert earl of Oxford, and Mortimer, of high treason and other high crimes and misdemeanours." His brother, called auditor Harley, and Foley, his brother-in-law, raised their voices in his defence. Sir Joseph Jekyll, a lawyer and a whig, yet preferred justice to party, and declared that there was neither matter nor evidence to sustain the charge of treason against Oxford, under the statute of Edward III. This opinion of an eminent lawyer and member of the committee made an impression, but only for a moment. Another member, not named, declared that there was parole evidence, not set forth in the report, to reach the late lord treasurer; and upon the iniquitous pretence of this averment, the house voted that he should be impeached as a traitor.

The whigs appeared reluctant to attack the duke of Ormond. His profuse and pompous ostentation of popularity, and the use of his name as a watchword by jacobite mobs, provoked the court*, and on the 21st of June, he was impeached of treason by secretary Stanhope. Several members, of whom some were whigs, urged in his favour his share in the revolution — the only stain, by the way, upon his character — his

* Parl. Hist. vii. 70. note.

gallantry and services in king William's wars — the generosity of his character. After a debate of several hours, the vote to impeach him, sustained on vague and weak grounds, was carried by a majority of 234 to 187. Next day, Strafford was impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours only, committed by him as negotiator of the peace of Utrecht. His accuser was Aislabie, a subaltern whig placeman, who will hereafter appear conspicuously corrupt in the South Sea scheme. Strafford was joint plenipotentiary with Robinson, the bishop of Bristol, now bishop of London: but the whigs, having the Sacheverell affair and the fear of the church before their eyes, affected to make a distinction, "the good and pious prelate having been put at the head of the negotiation only to palliate the iniquity of it under the sacredness of his character." The bishop took up the mantle of innocence and simplicity abused thus presented him, declared that "he was kept in the dark, and scarcely knew any thing of what was doing at Utrecht," and was very awkwardly reminded of this declaration two years later, when, forgetting that he had made it, he took upon himself the full responsibility of what he called "as good a peace as had been made for forty years." * A tory member observed that it seemed the bishop was to be allowed the benefit of clergy.

Articles of impeachment were soon prepared against the several inculpated persons. The charges against them, set forth in detail with perfidious art, may be reduced in substance to the separate and secret preliminary articles between the ministers of England and France; the armistice with its accessaries; aiding and abetting the French king, a public enemy, in the means of gaining Tournay from the Dutch. The last article alone could, with a shadow of reason, be construed into treason under the 25th of Edward III., the relation between England and France at the time being that of war. But a treaty of peace was at the same time pend-

* Parl. Hist. vii. 421.

ing; and an English minister, though chargeable with bad faith to an ally, might under the circumstances but consult the interests of his country and his sovereign. Nothing but the most constrained construction would make it treason. Jekyll repeated his opinion that it was not treason under the statute, and Walpole rebuked him with a warrant and personality worth notice only as indicating the party thirst for a capital judgment on the accused.

Bolingbroke did not wait even the commencement of these proceedings. He appeared as usual in public and in parliament up to the 24th of March, showed himself at Drury-lane theatre on the evening of that day, commanded a performance, subscribed to a new opera, and fled next morning in the suite and livery of a French king's messenger returning to France. He has assigned two very different motives at different times for his flight. In a letter addressed by him from Dover to a friend, said to be lord Lansdowne, he excused his "abrupt departure" by his having undoubted assurance of a design "to pursue him to the scaffold," and of making "his blood the cement of a new alliance." He further said, "his innocence could be no security, and challenged his enemies to produce against him one instance of criminal correspondence, or the least corruption." * No one who wades through the report of the secret committee † will admit the instances produced, but his danger was not the less imminent,—the fear of his talents would have shed his blood. In his celebrated letter to sir William Windham, written two years later, he ascribes his flight to his abhorrence of making common cause with Oxford. "I abhorred Oxford," he writes, "to that degree that I could not bear to be joined with him in any case. Nothing, perhaps, so much determined me as this sentiment. A sense of honour would not have permitted me to dis-

* This letter may be seen in the Parliamentary History (vii. 54.) and other historical compilations relating to the period.

† See Appendix I. Parl. Hist. *ibid.*

tinguish between his case and mine, and it was worse than death to lie under the necessity of making them the same, and taking measures in concert with him."

The case was still weaker against Ormond. In the armistice he but obeyed orders, which it would have been highly penal to transgress. Upon being impeached, he soon fled like Bolingbroke to France. The last interview between Ormond and Oxford is said to have been secretly. Each tried to persuade the other, the former to fly, the latter to remain; and they took leave of each other, with "Adieu Oxford, without a head,"—"Adieu duke, without a duchy." Bills of attainder against Henry viscount Bolingbroke, and James duke of Ormond, as traitors fled from justice, were finally passed on the 18th of August, under a common protest against both, signed by fourteen peers in the case of the former, and fifteen in that of the latter.*

Ormond fled to France in the beginning of August, and, without waiting to be attainted, joined the pretender. Bolingbroke, who had arrived there some months before, kept aloof from the pretender and his followers, endeavoured to make his peace with the government at home through lord Stair, ambassador at Versailles, promised meanwhile to enter into no jacobite engagement, and kept his word.† He found himself attainted. "The smart," says he, "of a bill of attainder tingled in every vein;" he joined the pretender's mockery of a court at Commercy; he accepted the seals as his secretary; and after the very first

* The second head of the protest is important, as it affects the merits:—"2dly, Because no particular proofs have been laid before the house of any high treason, or other high crimes and misdemeanours with which he stands charged: nor has any evidence been given to this house of his adhering to the king's enemies, or being concerned in any traitorous design since he left England." The following are the signatures:—Scarsdale; Geo. Bath and Wells; Fra. Cestriens; Bathurst; Masham; Compton; Foley; Stafford; Lansdowne; Ashburnham; Willoughby de Broke; Fr. Roffen; Abingdon; Weston; Clarendon. The bishop of Bath and Wells signed the protest in the case of Ormond only—the rest in both cases.

† Lett. to sir W. Windham—borne out by "lord Stair's embassy," &c., in Hard. Pap. vol. ii.

interview, lost all confidence in his person and his cause.*

Bolingbroke, after a show of fearless defiance, fled with precipitation; and Oxford, after having shrunk in manifest alarm to the retirement of his country house, awaited the issue. He may have considered that he had less to fear, or he may have remained simply because he was irresolute. Men of weak character will wait danger from the want of resolution to take a decisive part for avoiding it.† He took his seat in the house of lords the day after he was impeached, apparently secure and self-possessed, but the tory peers had the meanness to shun him. Lord Paulet, his humble slave, in his prosperity would scarcely speak to him; he became disconcerted, and left the house. On the 9th of July, lord Conningsby carried up the articles, impeached him at the bar of the lords, "prayed and demanded," in the name of the commons of England, "that Robert earl of Oxford and earl Mortimer should be sequestered from parliament and committed to safe custody," left the articles with their lordships, and withdrew. A debate ensued upon the question of a short postponement "in order to proceed with caution and deliberation in so grave a matter." The duke of Argyle replied with more spite than dignity, that the prelate who spoke last, "of late studied more politics than divinity," and was well prepared to debate the articles. The postponement was negatived by a majority of 86

* *Ibid.* It is not easy to account for the outcry propagated by so many writers, from one generation to another, against Bolingbroke. He is called "an unprincipled traitor," "a libertine," &c. The simple fact is, that, proscribed in his life, his honour, and his estate, iniquitously, as he *felt*, and as every competent and candid person now feels, he was driven, not only by his own passions and sense of wrong, but by the arts and passions of his enemies, into the arms of jacobitism. The offence of Bolingbroke was virtue itself compared with the traitorous intrigues of the whigs with king James in the early part of the reign of king William. Much, perhaps, of this surcharged obloquy may be ascribed to the tone of his philosophical writings.

† It is supposed that he trusted to the king's favour to his share in the act of settlement. He was painted as speaker with that act in his hand, and Prior, seeing the portrait after his impeachment, wrote upon the blank part of the scroll, "This bill paid in full July 12th, 1715," the date of the warrant for his committal as a traitor.

to 54; a motion for consulting the judges by 84 to 52; it was moved that the earl of Oxford should be committed to the Tower, and he addressed the house in his defence. The gist of his speech was a justification of the peace of Utrecht, the sanction of it by two successive parliaments, his having acted in obedience to the express commands of his sovereign without offending against any known law, his having had no share in the business of Tournay, which was wholly transacted, he said, by Bolingbroke.*

It is true, that the plea of having acted ministerially by the express commands of the sovereign was set up by lord Somers†, but the maxim which it involves was one of those despotic pretensions which brought Charles I. to the block; and as to the sanction of two successive parliaments, these might be servile or corrupt. The real justification of Oxford is, that there appears neither matter nor evidence of crime, and that the impeachment was dictated by party passions. After a feeble and fruitless request to be confined in his own house, on the ground of his health, he was committed to the Tower, and escorted thither by a mob, shouting, "high-church, Oxford and Ormond for ever." Lord Anglesea having said, in the course of the debate, that the violence of the ministers would make the sceptre shake in the king's hand, was interrupted with a cry of "the Tower," and conjured the storm by excuses. It would thus appear that the freedom of speech in parliament was limited by the condition of saying nothing distasteful to the court or ministry.

Strafford, upon being impeached, complained of the seizure of his papers "in an unprecedented manner," and demanded duplicates of such as were necessary for his defence. The secretary of state, lord Townshend, the chancellor Cowper, and the duke of Devonshire, said that extraordinary cases required extraordinary methods, and

* His speech is short, and evidently prepared with care and skill. It may be found in the Parliamentary History, vii. 105., and is worth perusal.

† See Vol. IX.

resisted the demand of duplicates or copies as a pretext to defeat justice by delay.* It would appear that Argyle was already discontented. His brother, Islay, supported the demand of Strafford, said there was but one judicature which could consistently refuse it, — the inquisition; and so wrought upon the house by this suggested parallel, that Strafford was allowed copies of such papers as he deemed necessary for his defence. He put in his answer to the impeachment; the commons by way of replication re-asserted their charges, and the case proceeded no further.†

A London mob, it has been observed, shouted high-church jacobitism at the heels of lord Oxford, on his way to the Tower. The rural mobs, especially in the midland and northern counties, were more tumultuary, committed outrages upon dissenting meeting-houses, and provoked a law of fearful compass, yet in the abstract salutary without being severe in its operation — the riot act.‡

The tumults which led to the riot act were regarded as indications of more secret and dangerous disaffection. The great outbreak took place on the 28th of May, the king's birth-day, and the 29th, the anniversary of the restoration. The windows of those who refused to illuminate were broken, several of the rioters were apprehended, and amongst the rest one Bowmois, a schoolmaster, who denied the king's right, and was tried and scourged through the city with such severity that he died in a few days. The guards became mutinous in consequence of the coarseness of the clothes assigned to them, especially linen. Many of them threw their shirts into the royal gardens, exclaiming, "These are Hanover shirts." In vain the duke of Marlborough addressed them, promising them new clothes, and throwing all the blame upon the contractors. It was universally believed, and not without some show of justice,

* Parl. Hist. vii. 156.

† See State Trials, vol. xv. p. 1044.

‡ There have been, doubtless, excesses and abuses in the employment of the act, but very few considering its powers and penalties.

that the whole affair was a piece of mean peculation, and that the duke was at the bottom of it; nor were the soldiers satisfied until an express order came down from the court to Whitehall, directing the guards to burn their new shirts. This prompt movement appeased their discontent, and recalled them to allegiance.

On the 20th of July, the king announced to both houses, from the throne, by the mouth of the lord chancellor, that he had certain advices of designed rebellion at home, and invasion from abroad, on behalf of the pretender; and on the following 21st of September, secretary Stanhope, by the king's commands, requested the consent of the house that six of the members should be apprehended on a well-grounded suspicion of treason. Two of the six members suspected, Harvey and Austin, were immediately apprehended; two more, Foster and Kynaston, absconded; a fifth, sir John Packing, was brought up from Worcestershire in custody, questioned before the council, and discharged of all suspicion; the sixth, sir William Windham, was arrested at his house in Somersetshire by a military officer and state messenger, went on his parole to take leave of his wife in another room, escaped by a private door, surrendered after some time, and was committed to the Tower. He was son-in-law of the duke of Somerset, who, upon this, resigned, or was removed from his office of master of the horse.* The session closed, or both houses rose by adjournment in obedience to "his majesty's royal will and pleasure†," on the 21st of September, and did not meet again for the despatch of busi-

* The duke, according to Tindall, took offence because his offer to bail his son-in-law was refused. Archdeacon Coxe (life of Walpole) states as a fact communicated to him by lord Sidney, the descendant of lord Townshend, that the duke of Somerset, wishing to prevent the arrest of Windham, offered to be responsible for him, before the king in council; that the members were disposed to give way from the fear of offending a person of his rank and influence; that lord Townshend protested against such a course where the proofs were so strong; and that the king, after the council rose, taking lord Townshend by the hand, said, "You have done me a great service to day."

† It appears that George I., like Charles II., claimed the prerogative of ordering both houses to adjourn at any moment at his royal will and pleasure (see Parl. Hist. vii. 292.), which the house of commons questioned towards the close of the reign of James I.

ness till the 9th of January. The speaker, on closing the session, addressed George I. in a strain as false and fulsome as ever speaker or chancellor, Turner or Clarendon, addressed Charles II. "Under your majesty's auspicious reign," says he, "your commons with pleasure behold the glories of the Plantagenets, your majesty's royal ancestors, revive!" Let it be remembered that his majesty, now about twelve months in England, had done nothing but lend himself to the views and vengeance of one party, and thereby precipitate the affection of another.

Death, during the sitting of parliament, deprived the whig party of three personages, who may be called historic. The historian bishop Burnet died on the 17th of March; in the seventy-second year of his age. Of Burnet's History of his own Times, little need be said to the reader of these pages. It is assuredly a work of much interest and instruction, respecting the transactions and chief personages of a long and memorable period, perhaps second only to that of Clarendon, even with its great and various inferiorities; but it is a safe guide to those only upon whom egregious conceit will not pass for authenticity and authority, reckless imputation for honest frankness, perfidious laxity of style and statement for carelessness and credulity. It seems to be an article of the whig profession of party faith, even at this day, to uphold the credit of bishop Burnet; and the apocryphal or spurious character of him, "drawn" as his son tells us, "by so elegant a hand as that of the late marquis of Halifax *" is still cited as testimony in his favour.†

* *Burnet*, vi. 335. "The copy," says the son of the bishop, and original editor of his history, "from which this is printed, was taken from one given to the bishop in the marquis of Halifax's own hand-writing, which was in the editor's hands, but *is at present mislaid*." This mislaid original has never turned up.

† See History of Europe, &c., by lord John Russell, ii. 60. If any doubt remained about the value of this piece of fulsome eulogy, under the name of "character," after the publication of lord Dartmouth's note in the Oxford edition., vi. 337., it is wholly removed by the Halifax MS. (cited in Vols VII. and VII. of this continuation) in which the marquis records his own and king William's contempt of the character and conduct of the bishop. It is strange that "the editor" (see last note), who thinks it no-

Thomas marquis of Wharton, lord privy seal, died on the 12th of April. If whiggism were synonymous with patriotism, lord Wharton would have been the first patriot of the age in which he lived. He was thoroughly and instinctively imbued and associated with the spirit of whiggism, and he brought to its service in parliament adroitness and vigour, if not wit and eloquence, with a peculiar happiness in hitting a weak point or laying bare a secret motive—out of parliament the art to gain and sway partizans by a certain frankness of tone not wholly assumed. With all this he was little fettered by any scruples of truth or justice in pursuing his party ends. There is reason to suppose he was a disciple of that school of state-craft which is associated with the name of Machiavelli. * He was distinguished for libertinism of life and conversation, both religious and moral, learned by him, it is said, in the court and company of Charles II., and inherited from him with his wit and talents by his deplorably eccentric son.

Charles Montague earl of Halifax, flattered doubtless, but also esteemed and loved in his life, and lamented in his death, expired on the 19th of May, in the fifty-fourth year of his age. Of his parliamentary speeches there are no remains deserving the name, but he who rose to the first rank in the state "by his abilities and eloquence in the house of commons," † must have been an orator. A minister of state who gives to the muses the short and few intervals of leisure left to him by the calls of ambition and his place, could produce only what

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cessary to give a voucher for the authenticity of a letter of archbishop Tillotson, printed from a copy (Burnet, vi. 325.), should think nothing more than his mere word necessary with reference to the "character."

* It would appear from a letter of bishop Warburton, in Farnworth's English edition of the works of Machiavelli, that lord Wharton was the author of the pretended "letter of Machiavelli to Buondelmonte." It seems to be the common notion that Machiavelli inculcates the maxims and practices of Cæsar Borgia, and other tyrants: he merely exposes them The anatomist who dissects a tiger, and shows how well the tiger's jaws and muscles are suited to his instincts, does not inculcate his ferocity. A man devoted to his country and its liberty, a virtuous citizen, and faithful servant of the Florentine republic, would hardly sit down to compose institutes of tyranny and state crime.

† Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, art. Halifax.

are called "occasional pieces," and ought in no case to be too severely judged; and those of lord Halifax, whether verse or prose, if wanting in vigour and elevation, are redeemed by wit, sense, and taste. Minds of a high order are the first to call in and profit by the lights of others, and the share which Newton and Locke had in the counsels of lord Halifax, has been turned against his capacity as a statesman, when in fact it is proof of his superiority.* His liberal patronage of letters and the arts subjected him to fulsome dedications, but his patronage and taste were not the less liberal. The dedicating race of the next generation as unscrupulously decried one from whom they had nothing to hope, and the splenetic effusion of Pope falsifies not only his character but a matter of fact. †

The extreme severity of the measures pursued by the government towards the tory party, instead of discouraging them, had the effect of inflaming them into open resistance. Their hatred of the whigs only wanted some

* The right reverend author of a tory poem, entitled "Faction Displayed," calls him

"——— Bathillo decked with borrowed bays,
Renowned for others' projects — others' lays."

† "Dryden alone (says Pope), what wonder! came not nigh —
Dryden alone escaped his judging eye."

Now, in point of fact, Dryden did not "escape his judging eye,"— but when Pope satirised Halifax, under the name of Bufo, he was, perhaps, labouring under one of those fits of resentment which so frequently committed him to the most faithless libels. A story is told in Spence's Anecdotes, about Garth having suggested to Pope, that lord Halifax, who had just found fault with some lines in the translation of the Iliad, was a superficial critic, and that if Pope would bring the lines back in a short time unaltered, his lordship, presuming that Pope had in the meanwhile acted on his advice, would approve of them: and the event, according to Pope, justified the prediction. This was not to be forgiven. Halifax offered Pope a pension, which, without being exactly refused, was never granted, so ungraciously was the offer received. This, too, may have inflamed the poet. Yet, on many occasions, notwithstanding his ill-will, Pope bore ample testimony to his lordship's character. Upon the occasion of his death he says,

The love of arts lies cold and dead
In Halifax's urn;
And not a muse of all he fed
Has yet the grace to mourn.—

And twenty years afterwards, in the Epilogue to the Satires, he celebrated his attachment to the memory of that excellent man, of whom, elsewhere, he observes, "The earl of Halifax was one of the first to favour me; of whom it is hard to say, whether the advancement of the polite arts is more owing to his generosity or his example." Thus setting Pope against Pope, we find the balance largely in favour of the traduced patron.

such excuse as the suspension of the habeas corpus act, an alternative frequently adopted in this reign *, to change their gall, hitherto discharged in venomous libels and pasquinades, into active hostility. † The partizans of the pretender, taking advantage of the excitement into which the nation was thrown by the arrests of so many distinguished individuals, resolved to make a de-

* Addison defended the suspension of the habeas corpus act in the Freeholder, on the ground that it enabled his majesty to seize the persons of disaffected lords and commoners, thus mercifully interposing between them and their evil intentions, and securing the peace of the kingdom. As to the right of suspending it, he thought nothing could be clearer. "It is an absurdity," he observes, "to imagine that those who have the authority of making laws, cannot suspend any particular law, when they think it expedient for the public." Nor was he at a loss for precedents. "The habeas corpus act," he adds, "was made but about five and thirty years ago, and since that time has been suspended four times before his present majesty's accession to the throne: twice under the reign of king William and queen Mary; once under the reign of king William; and once under the reign of queen Anne." When such bold measures are required, either for the maintenance of order, or the ascendency of party, there are always plausible reasons to be urged for embracing them. In this instance, the motives that actuated the administration were mixed—partly the preservation of tranquillity, partly the revenge of the whigs. His majesty appears to have kept aloof, as well as he could, from the perils by which he was surrounded, leaving every thing to his ministers, who fought the battle in his name. He was too dull, and, perhaps, too honest to enter zealously into the intrigues of the government; and we are told by lady M. W. Montagu, that his views were so low and narrow as to make him regard his accession to the throne in some sort as an act of usurpation, which was always uneasy to him.—See lord Wharncliffe's edition of lady M.'W. Montagu's works, i. 107.

† The Examiner, a tory paper set up in the previous reign, may be cited as an exemplar of the disgraceful spirit in which the political controversies of that day were conducted. It assailed the whigs in the grossest language, accused them of the worst crimes, and even consigned their dead patriots and churchmen to eternal torments. "There is something dreadful," says Addison, "even in repeating these execrable pieces of wit, which no man who really believes in another life can peruse without fear and trembling."—*Freeholder*, No. 19. But Bolingbroke, who was not so scrupulous about christianity as Addison, and who had no great reason to be grateful to either party, is of opinion that the one was just as bad as the other. According to him, jealousy of power produced those appearances of jacobitism in some of the tories, and the reality of it in others, which the whigs took advantage of, and imputed to the whole. The whigs magnified the monster, that they might have the greater merit in overcoming it, and accused their opponents of principles they did not entertain in order to make an excuse for taking revenge upon them for old resentments. Lord Bolingbroke's account of these parties will be found in his Letters on Patriotism, edited by Mallet. The duchess of Marlborough, who had, at all events, excellent opportunities of forming an accurate opinion, whatever ill-will may have been engendered in her mind by the position in which she was finally left by friends and foes, takes exactly the same view of both parties, in her celebrated auto-biographical Defence of her Conduct. Shortly after the publication of that book, she met a lady of distinction, who remarked that she thought the duchess had been too severe, both on the ministers and the opposition. "Not at all," replied the inflexible Sarah, "I have always said that the whigs were rogues, and the tories fools."

monstration simultaneously at both sides of the Tweed. The earl of Mar, at the head of 10,000 men, proclaimed the pretender at Castletown, in Scotland, in the month of September, under the style and title of James III.; and, at nearly the same time, the earl of Derwentwater and Mr. Forster appeared in considerable force in Northumberland, with the intention of surprising the town of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where they hoped to obtain reinforcements and supplies. But the inhabitants, chiefly dissenters, formed themselves into town guards for the defence of the place, and the rebel bands, disappointed in their calculations, retired hastily to Kelso, where they were joined by a body of Highlanders. This addition to their strength inspired them with renewed confidence, and, again crossing the border, they made a rapid and victorious progress southward, proclaiming the pretender at Warkworth, Penrith, Lancaster, and other places, until they reached the town of Preston. Here they were met by the king's forces, who invested the town, and compelled them to surrender. The progress of the earl of Mar was quite as disastrous in its final results. By a remarkable coincidence, he gave battle to the duke of Argyle, at Sheriff-moor, near Dunblane, in Scotland, on the very same day, November 12th, that his friends were overthrown at Preston. The duke of Argyle having received information of the earl of Mar's intention to cross the Forth, for the purpose of joining the insurgents in England, anticipated his advance by securing the passes of the river, and taking up his position with 4000 on the heights of Dunblane. The earl of Mar, whose force consisted of about 8000, newly raised, and ill supplied with arms and horses, opened the attack, in the first shock of which the valiant Clanronald, who commanded the right wing, was slain. This unpropitious accident might have at once determined the fortunes of the day, but for the devotion and presence of mind of Glengarry, who, waving his bonnet at the head of the troops, shouted "Revenge!" three or four times. Thus incited, the Highlanders

charged the left of the king's army, sword in hand, with such impetuosity, that in less than seven minutes the whole body of that division, horse and foot, was entirely broken. General Whetham, who commanded that wing, believing that the fate of the battle was decided, fled in consternation to Stirling, with the intelligence of the duke of Argyle's defeat: but in the mean while, the duke, at the head of the dragoons, fell upon the enemy's left, and drove them before him for two miles, to the waters of Loch Allan, the indomitable spirit of the enemy harassing him severely in the pursuit, by ten distinct attempts to rally their lines in that short distance. On his return, he met the right wing of the rebels, coming back flushed with their success over the scattered troops of Whetham: and at this moment each army found itself in possession of the station that had been previously occupied by the other, having by the events of the day exchanged their ground, as it happened to the contending forces engaged in the battle of Naseby. Towards evening, the earl of Mar retired to Ardoch, and the duke of Argyle resumed the heights of Dunblane. The next day, he carried off the wounded from the field, with four pieces of cannon left behind by the enemy, and took his way to Stirling. The loss on each side was estimated at about 500, and both generals claimed the victory. But the advantage was chiefly with the king's army, who maintained their post at the last with a force numerically inferior to that of their adversaries.

So close, however, was the balance of success, that a variety of rumours were spread concerning the triumphant progress of the rebels, and it was even reported that the earl of Mar was on the road to London, within two days march of the Tower. The whigs treated these exaggerations with contempt, and Addison suggested to the tories, that they might say with king Pyrrhus, that such another victory would undo them.

The duke of Argyle followed up his successes to the further discomfiture of the insurgents, forcing them to

abandon Perth, Dundee, and Montrose, in succession. At the same time, four officers, tried at Preston as deserters, were shot; and the principal prisoners, including seven peers, were taken to London, led pinioned through the city, and committed to different prisons. Many others were tried and executed in Liverpool; some died from the severity of the season and want of necessaries, and a few had their sentences commuted to transportation. But the great offenders were reserved for a special commission.

On the 26th of December, the pretender landed at Peterhead, near Aberdeen, where he immediately formed a sort of travelling court, issued sundry proclamations for convening the estates, for raising levies, and for solemnising his coronation, created several peers and knights, received addresses from the clergy and laity of the neighbourhood, and sent an order to the lord mayor of London, to proclaim him in the capital. From Aberdeen he moved to Glamis, and from thence made a public entry into Dundee, finally taking up his residence at the palace of Scone, on the 7th of January. But 1716.
this ill-conducted enterprize, upon which much valour in the ranks of its supporters was expended in vain, owing to the folly and weakness of its head, did not long continue to disturb the peace of the kingdom. Argyle had accurate intelligence of the proceedings of the enemy, and tracked him from Perth to Brechlin. The pretender at length discovered that his cause was hopeless, and hastily embarking at night in a French ship, that lay in the harbour of Montrose, accompanied by Mar and Melfort, the most faithful of all his followers, he stood out to sea for Norway, and, coasting along the shores of Holland and Germany, to avoid pursuit, arrived at Gravelines in five days. Thus terminated the hopes of the tories in that quarter: the rebel army fled into the mountains of the north, and, gradually dispersing, left England to its conflict of parties in the council chamber and the parliament.

The influence of personal reputation over the direction

of events—that superstition of the imagination, which sometimes invests a cause or an individual with the attributes of destiny—has rarely been more distinctly exhibited than in the cases of the pretender and his illustrious opponent. The former was proverbially unlucky — the latter uniformly prosperous. Had they lived in the times of astrology, and had their nativities been cast under opposing stars, the popular faith on these points could hardly have been much stronger. The life of the pretender, no doubt, abundantly justified distrust of his good fortune; while the whigs assiduously cultivated the impression that George I. always succeeded in whatever he undertook, — a prophecy that generally produces its own fulfilment. "For me," said the pretender, in a speech addressed to his friends in council, "it will be no new thing if I am unfortunate; my whole life, even from my cradle, has shown a constant series of misfortunes; and I am prepared, if so it please God, to suffer the threats of my enemies and yours." This despondency, damping the zeal of his adherents, was forcibly contrasted with the enthusiasm of the king's party, who invariably endeavoured to persuade the people that his majesty could not fail. "Having thus far," says one of his most strenuous servants, "considered our happiness in his majesty's civil and military character, I cannot forbear pleasing myself with regarding him in the view of one who has been always fortunate. Cicero recommends Pompey under this particular head to the Romans, with whom the character of being fortunate was so popular, that several of their emperors gave it a place amongst their titles." * And then he goes on to describe the interest Providence had taken in the affairs of the king, always interposing at the right moment to insure his success. By such arts was the elector of Hanover recommended to the regards of his new subjects.

The conduct of the pretender throughout the whole

* Addison, Freeholder, No. 2.

of this agitated period, betrayed extraordinary imbecility of character, rendered still more dangerous by the blindest fanaticism. In vain Bolingbroke counselled him to embody in his declaration to the people of England, a promise that the established church should be respected. He said that it had been suggested to him, that such a promise would be a violation of conscience, and the declaration was accordingly drawn up with such alterations and provisions that Bolingbroke refused to be concerned in it. "The spring of his whole conduct," said Bolingbroke, "is *fear*, and there were very few amongst the Roman catholics themselves who did not think him *too much of a papist*." The earl of Mar, alone, endeavoured to shelter the reputation of the pretender by attributing the failure of the undertaking to the mismanagement of others. In a narrative of the expedition into Scotland, which he published soon after his arrival in Paris, he explicitly states, that he had expected the co-operation of Forster in the South of Scotland, and that he was wholly disappointed in the anticipated supplies of men and ammunition from France; while to the insidious proceedings of Bolingbroke, he plainly attributes the ultimate derangement of the chevalier's affairs. But as it was incumbent upon the earl of Mar to furnish some excuses to the court of St. Germaine's for the abandonment of the design, these statements are to be regarded rather as the materials of a desperate defence than as strict historical facts. There is no doubt that the whole business was unskilfully planned, and executed without forethought or concert, and that much of the blame rested on the earl of Mar himself. Bolingbroke early detected the internal weakness of the councils by which the pretender was infatuated, and, with his usual promptitude, withdrew from them, — a crime that was not to be forgiven by the party he deserted.

The vindictive spirit exhibited by the government towards the principal noblemen who took part in the rebellion, and who were specially tried in Westminster hall, was both cruel and superfluous. The administration was

justly blamed, even by many of its supporters, for not having adopted measures for drawing the war to a conclusion, by issuing a proclamation to pardon those who should return to their allegiance, and sparing the nation the horrors of the scaffold, by passing an act of grace and indemnity after the rebellion had been suppressed.* It was evident that many of these lords were forced into jacobitism, which they would not have otherwise willingly embraced, by the violence of the whigs; and that even the most zealous of them would have considered themselves bound in honour never to bear arms against the king, had their lives been spared.† Seven of these unfortunate noblemen were impeached on the 11th of January, on the motion of Mr. Lechmere,—the earls of Derwentwater, Nithisdale, Carnwath, and Winton; the viscount Kenmure; and the lords Widdrington and Nairn: — and this impeachment was carried in due form to the bar of the house of lords. They all pleaded guilty, under an impression that it would propitiate the mercy of their enemies, but without effect. On the 9th of February sentence was pronounced upon them in Westminster hall, by the lord chancellor Cowper, who officiated as lord steward. Great intercession was made on their behalf with the court and the parliament, particularly in favour of the earl of Derwentwater, whose youth and gallantry excited universal commiseration.‡ The countess of Nithisdale and lady Nairn threw themselves at the king's feet, as his majesty was passing through the apartments of the palace, and afterwards appealed to his clemency in the royal bed-chamber, to which they were introduced by the dukes of Richmond and St. Albans. They also had petitions presented to both houses, but in the commons they were negatived by a motion for adjournment,

* Parl. Hist. vii. 445.

† "If that prince," said the earl of Derwentwater, in his dying declaration, "who now governs, had given me my life, I should have thought myself obliged never more to have taken up arms against him;" and this earl was a Roman catholic.

‡ Walpole stated that he had been offered 60,000*l.* to save the earl of Derwentwater's life. See Coxe's Walpole.

while in the lords, where a greater degree of sympathy prevailed, a motion was carried to address the king "to reprieve such of the condemned lords as deserved his mercy." The success of this motion was principally due to the earl of Nottingham, president of the council, who supported it, for which he was dismissed from his office, as well as his brother, the earl of Aylesford, chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster; his son, lord Finch, one of the lords of the treasury; and his cousin-german, lord Guernsey, master of the jewel office. The evening before the day appointed for execution, the earl of Nithisdale escaped from the Tower in woman's apparel, which had been brought to him by his mother; the remainder suffered their sentence with a firmness that could hardly fail to excite pity and admiration.*

* The earl of Derwentwater, after reading a paper he had drawn up, turned to the block, and finding a rough place in it that might offend his neck, bid the executioner cut it off: and lord Kenmure expressed his regret that, having so little thoughts of dying, he had not provided a black suit, that he might have died with more decency. *Part. Hist.* vii. 285, 286.

CHAP. II.

1716.

GENERAL DISCONTENT IN THE COUNTRY. — INTRODUCTION OF THE SEPTENNIAL ACT TO ESCAPE THE RISK OF AN ELECTION. — DEBATE AND PROTEST IN THE LORDS. — ENERGETIC RESISTANCE IN THE COMMONS. — THE BILL CARRIED WITH UNEXAMPLED RAPIDITY. — SPECIAL GROUNDS ON WHICH IT WAS ATTEMPTED TO BE JUSTIFIED. — CONSTITUTIONAL OBJECTIONS TO THE PRINCIPLE OF THE MEASURE — AND THE PRETEXTS UNDER WHICH IT WAS FORCED UPON THE LEGISLATURE. — ITS INCONSISTENCY WITH THE DECLARATION OF THE BILL OF RIGHTS. — ITS EFFECT UPON THE PRIVILEGES OF PARLIAMENT. — DOUBTS OF THE RIGHT OF PARLIAMENT TO PROLONG ITS OWN EXISTENCE. — INSTANCES IN WHICH ACTS OF PARLIAMENT WOULD BE INVALID. — SUBSEQUENT REVOLUTION OF OPINION AMONGST THE SUPPORTERS OF THE SEPTENNIAL ACT. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

THE discontents caused by these events, the general sympathy which such extreme punishments produced, and the ascendency gradually asserted by the sentiments of humanity over the rage of party*, now that the civil war was at end, led the tories, on the one hand, to rely with confidence on the next general election, while the whigs, on the other, regarded an appeal to the country at such a juncture with undisguised apprehensions. In this case, as in all others, persecution had re-acted on its authors, and the martyrs of the unpopular cause made proselytes amongst the people. The dilemma to which the government was thus reduced did

* The house of commons was so troubled by petitions in favour of the noblemen under sentence of death, that Walpole, to get rid of the annoyance of receiving petitions which the majority were, beforehand, determined to reject, proposed an adjournment over the day appointed for the execution. This severity, so opposed to the natural bias of his disposition, only serves to prove the extremities to which the administration were reduced in their efforts to coerce the feelings of the nation, already sufficiently lacerated by the calamities of the rebellion.

not admit of an easy escape; and certainly there never was an administration in England which exhibited greater boldness in the adoption of a perilous, tyrannical, and unconstitutional remedy. The whigs knew, or feared, that an election would throw the majority into the hands of their opponents, and that, cast out of power, they would be exposed to measures of violence and revenge, similar to those of which they had themselves set so terrible an example. Even if the tories failed in obtaining the upper hand, the tumults of the struggle at the hustings could not be contemplated without the most serious alarm. Whichever way they looked, they had but one alternative — that of prolonging the existence of parliament, in order to prolong their own. For this purpose — and for this purpose alone — basing a perpetual act, which should tie up the free-will of posterity, upon a temporary necessity, and changing the permanent constitution of parliament to avert a contingent danger, they resolved upon the introduction of the famous septennial bill, by which the duration of parliament was extended from three to seven years.

It would appear that some doubt existed in the first instance, amongst those with whom this celebrated measure originated, as to the propriety of making it binding upon future times. They had grace enough to confess to themselves that all they wanted was to avoid an election so likely to unseat them, and that it would be scarcely justifiable, for such an object, to alter the fundamental principle of popular representation. With this view, it was suggested merely to suspend the triennial act for once *, the establishment of such a precedent being regarded as less objectionable than its expansion into a law; it not having occurred to them that any definite and limited law, however stringent and oppressive, is less injurious to the liberties of a nation than the capricious exercise of an arbitrary and irresponsible power. The septennial act, striking, as it did, at the

* Tindal.

rights of the electors, possessed at least the recommendation of fixing the tenure of their representatives; while the precedent of prolonging the duration of parliament, to meet the exigencies of the crown, would have been fraught with evils which could neither be predicted nor prevented. The whigs, however, at that period were so familiar with the spectacle of a suspended constitution, that the original scheme of suspending the triennial act cannot excite much astonishment. But after some deliberation, they considered it safer to repeal that act altogether; not, perhaps, for the reasons we have stated, but because it afforded them a broader ground of argument on general principles than they could have secured had they proceeded solely on the urgency of the occasion.

Having determined upon the measure, the next question to be settled was, whether it should be introduced in the lords or the commons.* For obvious reasons, they determined on the former. They were sure of the commons, which had already given such proofs of devotion to the government, and which might naturally be expected to favour a project that conferred upon themselves such a long lease of impunity; while, supposing it to be defeated in the lords, the odium of the design — for it was admitted on all hands to be unpopular out of doors — would not be visited upon the ministerial candidates to the prejudice of subsequent elections. It was accordingly decided that it should be moved in the house of lords, where the bill was introduced, on the 10th of April, by the duke of Devonshire, in a specious and careful speech. An attempt was made, in deference to the great importance of the subject, to obtain a postponement of the reading, in order to gain sufficient time to weigh and consider the measure maturely, but the ministers carried their point; and after a warm debate, the bill was committed on the 14th, by a majority of 35.† On the following Monday (16th), a

* Tindal.

† Content 77, proxies 19 — 96; not-content 43, proxies 18 — 61. *Parl. Hist.* vii. 305.

protest was entered by thirty peers, in which the grounds upon which the bill was supported were severally examined and repudiated. The concluding clause of this protest is especially worthy of notice:—"We conceive that whatever reasons may induce the lords to pass this bill to continue this parliament for seven years will at least be as strong, and may, by the conduct of the ministry, be made much stronger before the end of seven years for continuing it still longer, and even to perpetuate it, which would be an express and absolute subversion of the third estate of the legislature."* Notwithstanding, however, the obvious truth and constitutional wisdom of this protest, the bill finally passed the lords on the 17th, by a majority of 69 voices against 36. Another protest was signed by twenty-four lords; but no remonstrance on the part of those who, upon this occasion, vindicated the rights of the people could avail against the influence of the whigs. The open profligacy of this notorious bill was not less remarkable than the indecent haste with which it was hurried through the upper chamber.

In the commons a bolder stand was made by its opponents: the principles of the measure were more fully and zealously discussed; and although the majority in its favour was overwhelming, the debates that took place during its progress were animated by a spirit of patriotism that left ministers nothing to boast of in the result, except a naked victory of force over truth and justice.† The second reading was carried by a majority of 276 against 156. Lord Guernsey moved the re-

* This protest appears to have been mainly founded on the speech of the earl of Nottingham, by whom it was probably drawn up.

† That the superiority of argument was on the side of the minority is admitted even by Coxe, a strenuous advocate for septennial parliaments. "We," he observes in his Life of Walpole, "who live at this distance of time, without being heated by the warmth of party, without sufficiently considering the temper and state of the nation, and without weighing the peculiar circumstances which occasioned its introduction, must confess that, in theory, the arguments of those who opposed it are the most specious and convincing." Why we who live at this distance of time, and who, unmoved by party considerations, may be presumed to be more impartial and candid in our judgment than those who were concerned in the measure at either side, should be pronounced, *ex cathedra*, unqualified to estimate the practical value of the bill, is not very intelligible.

jection of the bill without reading it, but was over-ruled on a point of form; and a distinguished member of the house, an energetic supporter too of the protestant succession, declared that "it was an imposition of the lords to take upon them to direct the commons in a matter which solely concerned them as guardians of the rights and liberties of the people." * To this objection the lord Coningsby replied by referring to the precedent of the Triennial Bill, which took its initial stages in the house of lords; and thus, building one innovation upon the foundations of another, the just privileges of the nation were set at defiance.

After a long and violent discussion, the bill was ordered to be committed by a majority of 284 against 162; and was finally passed on the 26th of April, by a majority of 264 against 121. Ten petitions were presented to the commons against it, and not one in its favour. The whole proceeding in reference to this measure occupied only sixteen days from its introduction into the lords on the 10th, to the third reading in the commons on the 26th; and in that brief period—hardly sufficient for the patient examination of the most unimportant act of parliament—the character, powers, and responsibility of the elective branch of the legislature underwent a fundamental change. Were there no other grounds for looking back with suspicion upon this memorable parliamentary operation, the rapidity with which it was accomplished would be sufficient to excite the jealousy of the nation; nor can the parliament ever be expected to enjoy the entire confidence of the people, so long as its duration continues to be regulated by an act the validity of which is doubtful, since the people literally had no share in it, and the wisdom of which may be questioned from the want of deliberation that marked its origin, progress, and consummation.

The special grounds upon which the necessity and expediency of the bill were defended may be thus enumerated: — First, The expenses attending frequent

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 303.

elections. Secondly, The divisions and disturbances they occasioned. Thirdly, The advantages accruing to the enemies of the country from these domestic feuds. And fourthly, The encouragement which the bill held out to foreign powers to form alliances with us. Every one of these grounds were overturned in the debates, both in the lords and commons; and the arguments, traced through the speeches of the opposition, may be briefly exhibited under each separate head.

1. The expenses incurred at elections are voluntary, and cannot be held as a sufficient justification of the annulment of the popular right of frequent revisions in the choice of representatives. Besides, if these expenses were felt to be an evil, they might have been corrected by a special enactment (as has subsequently been done by the Reform Bill), without disturbing the foundations of the constitution. Bribery and corruption unquestionably prevailed to a considerable extent; but they were susceptible of a distinct remedy, which might have been adopted as a separate measure standing on its own merits. Besides, the Septennial Bill, instead of diminishing the evil it professed to cure, evidently increased it; for if it was worth a candidate's while to expend large sums upon a three years' lease, it was still better worth his while to expend money upon a seven years' lease. The subsequent history of election contests in this country demonstrates the fallacy of the pretence that the bill was calculated to correct the mischief; since it is perfectly notorious that contested elections have led to tenfold the expenditure since the date of the Septennial Bill than ever they cost before,— for the very obvious reason, that the prize contended for was enhanced in value, while the machinery and avenues of corruption were in no single point of view weakened or curtailed. The effect of the measure, therefore, was to extend the grievance it proposed to counteract. This effect was fully anticipated by the opponents of the bill. The dissentient lords declare in their protest, that the bill, "so far from preventing expenses and corruptions,

will rather increase them; for the longer a parliament is to last, the more valuable to the purchaser is a station in it, and the greater also is the danger of corrupting the members of it." * The earl of Aylesford observed, that "it could not be denied that a great deal of money is expended in elections, but the candidates may choose whether they will spend any or no; that it may likewise be granted that those expenses lay the foundation of corruption, and that those who make them are in hopes to get either places or pensions; but that, by the Triennial Act, the country has an opportunity to remedy any abuses that may be committed by any of their representatives, who, to make good their expenses at elections, should yield to the temptation of a place or pension to sacrifice their votes in parliament; *whereas, on the contrary, this bill will establish a grievance, and take away a remedy.*" †

2. To assume that a bill which simply lengthened the duration of parliament, without including any provisions for the better organization of elections, should have the effect of preventing the divisions and tumults attendant upon the struggle of interests at the hustings, was preposterous. All it could do was to render such tumults and divisions less frequent. In this instance, as in the former, a merit was claimed for the bill which it did not possess; while the evil was left untouched, instead of having been made the subject of special legislation. It may be added, that the Reform Bill has corrected both evils — expenses and tumults; and that they can no longer be urged in favour of the existence of septennial parliaments.

But, upon this view of the subject, a still more important question arises in reference to the popular rights involved in the abrogation of frequent elections. All throughout the debates, the supporters of the measure endeavoured to draw a refined distinction between frequent *parliaments* and frequent *elections*, in answer to the urgent assertion of the principle, that the frequent

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 306. † Ibid. 301.

recurrence of parliaments is essential to the maintenance of public liberty. Mr. Hampden, in defence of the bill, observed, that "A principal argument for continuing the Triennial Bill is, that it is agreeable to the ancient laws of this nation that there should be frequent parliaments. I find by the laws I have looked over that parliaments ought to be frequently held; but I find it no where laid down as a fundamental position of the nature of this constitution that there should be frequent elections." * This argument was a little unfortunate; because, although Mr. Hampden could not find it laid down in the laws, it was expressly laid down in the preamble of the very act of parliament which he was then calling on the house of commons to repeal. The preamble of the Triennial Bill explicitly declares, that "by the ancient laws and statutes of the realm frequent parliaments ought to be held, and that frequent NEW parliaments tend very much to the happy union and the good agreement of the king and his people." So far as history is concerned, annual parliaments may be said to be coeval with the constitution; and in the reign of Edward III. it was enacted that parliaments should be holden once a year, and oftener if need be. That annual elections were not specified, admits the entrance of some disingenuous sophistry into the discussion; but as it is notorious that prorogations and long adjournments were unknown in those times, there can be little reasonable doubt that by *annual* parliaments *new* parliaments alone were contemplated.

Mr. Hampden attempted to draw another negative testimony in defence of the constitutional propriety of the measure from the absence of all reference to frequent elections in the Bill of Rights. "In that bill," he said, "among the long catalogue of grievances which precedes the said declaration (that the liberties of the people shall be strictly observed), there is not the least mention made of want of frequent elections; but only

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 321.

that parliaments ought to be free." In answer to this argument it is enough to observe, that in the Bill of Rights there is not the least mention made of frequent parliaments; so that the discovery either way goes for nothing. In an argument of this kind, which appeals to testimony and authority, it is absolutely imperative that the proposition should be affirmatively proved on one side, in order to establish the falsehood of the proposition on the other; but in this case nothing whatever is proved, except that the Bill of Rights stipulates that parliaments, whether they be frequent or unfrequent, shall be free, — a stipulation which was quite as available to those who opposed the Septennial Act, while it was much more consonant with their principles, as to those who supported it. To derive, from such materials, the perilous conclusion that because frequent parliaments were expressly required by the constitution, therefore frequent elections were not, was one of the extravagant shifts into which the advocates of the bill were driven by their clear-sighted and persevering opponents.

With respect to the Bill of Rights, which guarantees to parliament the free exercise of the privileges it possesses for the good of the people, an ulterior argument may be raised as to how far it was infringed by, or how far its provisions hold good in regard to, the new constitution of the house of commons under the Septennial Act. The particular declaration comprehending and enforcing the privileges of parliament is expressed in these words: "That the freedom of speech, or debates, and proceedings in parliament, ought not to be impeached or questioned in any court or place out of parliament;" and within this general declaration all the privileges — freedom of debate, the examination of witnesses, the printing and publishing of reports and evidence, &c., some of which have at different times become subjects of contention — are understood to be embraced. This declaration, or more properly the whole Bill of Rights, is held to apply with equal force

to septennial parliaments, as to those parliaments that were recognised by the constitution at the passing of the Bill of Rights; and we are in the habit of referring to that bill as the safeguard of our liberties. But when the Bill of Rights passed, septennial parliaments were unknown; and those protective declarations of popular rights, reflected in the senate, were applied expressly and directly to parliaments of frequent recurrence. We have no right to assume that the framers of that bill might not have adopted similar declarations in reference to parliaments of longer duration: we only know that they did not, and that the privileges which they considered indispensable for the integrity and security of legislation were conferred upon parliaments which frequently returned their trusts into the hands of the people. It is clear, therefore, that the Bill of Rights cannot be justly pleaded in defence of any rights or privileges claimed by a parliament the constitution of which has been subsequently fixed, since such parliament cannot be truly said to derive its immunities under that bill. The principle which guarantees perfect freedom to the proceedings of parliament is doubtless an elementary principle; and it may with some show of reason be urged that it remains unaffected by the incident of duration. But an elementary principle of this practical nature has limitations according to circumstances, which are quite as obvious and as stringent as the necessity on which it is originally based. Suppose that the ministers of the day, instead of introducing a septennial bill, had introduced a bill for extending the duration of parliament to fifty years—would that have made no difference in the application of this principle of impunity? The framers of the Bill of Rights never anticipated such a measure, and provided no remedy against it; contenting themselves with protecting the privileges of parliament as it was then constituted, confident of the means of redress which at short intervals reverted to the nation. But had they foreseen that a longer duration of power was likely to be bestowed upon the representatives of

the people; is it not probable, judging from the general spirit of that declaration, that while they protected the parliament against encroachments from without, they would have also protected the people against the hazard of encroachments from the parliament? The people and the parliament are identical, so long as the people possess frequent opportunities of choosing their representatives; but in proportion as these opportunities are diminished, and distributed over wider periods of time, so in proportion are the people removed from a salutary influence over the conduct of their representatives, and the sympathies between them reduced or obliterated. The principle, therefore, which would be right in full application to one tenure of representative legislation, might require modification in reference to another; and such modification ought to proceed in a corresponding ratio with the departure from the original term. While it might be essential to the liberties of the people to invest short parliaments with general and supreme powers, it might, for the same reason, be necessary to define and restrict such powers in the case of long parliaments; for it cannot be asserted that the people are represented with equal fidelity by both. It would seem, therefore, that the Septennial Act, in so far as it deviated from the conditions of those parliaments which were sheltered in their privileges by the declarations of the Bill of Rights, must have had the effect of weakening the popular influence of such privileges; and this result, which has been in course of gradual development ever since, may be described as one of the most dangerous evils that bold and inconsiderate measure has produced.* Not one single instance has occurred since the passing of the Septennial Act, in which parliament has attempted

* Lord Bacon seems to point out this remote consequence of long parliaments in the following passage of a letter addressed by him to the duke of Buckingham:—"The true use of parliaments in this kingdom," he says, "is very excellent; and they should be *often* called, as affairs of the kingdom shall require, and continued as long as is necessary, *and no longer;* for *then* they will be but *burthens* to the people, by reason of the PRIVILEGES justly due to the members of the two houses, and their attendants; which their just right and privileges are religiously to be observed and maintained."

to vindicate its privileges, that it has not been compelled to compromise them.

Steele, who voted with ministers, supported the bill, on the ground that three years did not constitute a sufficient term to enable parliament to mature and complete efficient measures for the public advantage. "Now," he exclaimed, "when the thing is thus, and that the period of three years is found from infallible experience itself a period that can afford us no good, where shall we rest? The ills that are to be done against single persons or communities are done by surprise, and on a sudden; but good things are slow in their progress, and must wait occasion. Destruction is done with a blow; but reformation is brought about by leisurely advances. All the mischiefs which can be wrought under the Septennial Act can be perpetrated under the Triennial; but all the good which may be compassed under the Septennial, cannot be hoped for under the Triennial." * The fallacy of this reasoning is sufficiently exposed, not merely by the fact that the business of the country was carried on for some hundreds of years by annual parliaments only, but by the subsequent history of our parliaments, the average duration of which exhibits a very trifling excess above three years; so that the leisurely good which was anticipated from the Septennial Act has not been accomplished after all. If great benefits were to accrue to the people from the seven years' tenure, ministers have usually taken care to deprive the country of them by cutting short the sittings of parliament whenever it suited their convenience. Should it, however, be argued that the act has consequently not been productive of all the mischief that might have been apprehended, the answer is to be found in the fact that ministers are armed by the Septennial Act with the power of inflicting the mischief in its full extent, just as it may happen to be useful to their own occasions. It is the existence of this power which is objectionable;

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 326.

while the caprice and irregularity with which it has been exercised, afford abundant evidence that such power is incompatible with the true spirit of representative government.

3. To this ground of expediency sir Robert Raymond* conclusively replied by observing, that there was no doubt our enemies would take advantage of our intestine divisions if it was in their power; but that since the Triennial Act had passed, there had been ten several parliaments called, most of them when the country was actually at war, when our animosities were great, and our enemies vigilant; yet no inconveniences followed, nor were any so much as attempted at those elections.† Mr. Shippen‡ showed that the whole object of putting forward such arguments was to preserve the administration against the risk of an election; and that it was the ministers and not the people who had reason to fear the machinations of enemies. "One main reason urged," said that honest and inflexible patriot, "both in the preamble of the bill and in the debates of the gentlemen who are for it, is this, that the disaffections of the people are so

* Sir Robert Raymond had been solicitor-general to queen Anne; and notwithstanding his resolute opposition to the Septennial Bill, was afterwards attorney-general to George I. He was subsequently appointed one of the commissioners of the great seal, and chief justice of the King's Bench, in which station he died in 1732.— *Lord Orford's Noble Authors.*

† Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 336.

‡ Shippen was distinguished amongst his cotemporaries for his courage, independence, and political integrity. He was the friend of Atterbury, with whom he maintained a constant correspondence during his exile, and of sir Robert Walpole, in spite of their differences in public. He used to say, "Robin and I are two honest men. He is for king George, and I for king James; but those men with long cravats (meaning Sandys, sir John Rushout, Gibbon, and others) only desire places under king George or king James." Walpole frequently declared that "he would not say who was corrupted, but he would say who was not corruptible; that man was Shippen." Pope bears similar testimony to his inflexible honesty—

"I love to pour out all myself, as plain
As downright Shippen, or as old Montagne."

Mr. Bowles (see his edition of Pope's Works) thinks that Pope's panegyric may be accounted for by Shippen's disaffection to the protestant succession; but Walpole's is above suspicion. Coxe, in his Memoirs of Walpole, thus describes Shippen's style of speaking: — "By the accounts of those who had heard him in the house of commons, his manner was highly energetic and spirited, as to sentiment and expression; but he generally spoke in a low tone of voice, with too great rapidity, and held his glove before his mouth. His speeches usually contained some pointed period, which peculiarly applied to the subject in debate, and which he uttered with great animation."

great, and the enemies of the government both at home and abroad so watchful, that new elections will occasion new riots, rekindle the rebellion, and be destructive of the peace and security of the government, which will all be prevented by continuing this good parliament, and making the time of its dissolution uncertain.* If this argument be applied to the ministry, I can only answer, that it is no concern of ours whether they have rendered themselves odious to the people or not. *They are more properly the object of our jealousy than our care.* They may be destroyed, and the government subsist."†

4. The next argument, derived from the assumption that the bill would give encouragement to our allies to enter into treaties with us, was the most untenable of all. "Sorry should I be," exclaimed sir Robert Raymond, "to suppose we had any allies who refused to treat with us because we refused to relinquish our constitution." ‡ "This is an argument," said Shippen, "highly improper to be urged in a British parliament; for it supposes that our allies prescribe to our counsels, and that they expect we should alter the present frame of our constitution before they will favour us with their friendship." § In addition to this, it went upon the false assumption that parliament was concerned in the formation of the treaties and alliances, a prerogative that belongs exclusively to the crown. "Those who make use of this argument," observed Mr. Snell in one of the ablest speeches delivered on this important occasion, "are strangers to the constitution of England; for by the known and standing law of the land, the right of making peace and war, treaties and alliances, is undeniably the king's prerogative; and the king may exercise that right as to him seems best, and most for the good and benefit of his people, without application to parlia-

* At the very time Shippen was addressing the house, parliament was little more than a year old; so that it had yet at least one year and a half to run, which ought to have been enough in reason to allow the discontents to cool. But this only proves that the discontents were made an excuse to carry the bill.

† Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 314. ‡ Ibid. 336. § Ibid. 315.

ment either to approve or confirm.* But admitting," he continued, "that of late years parliaments have thought themselves entitled to interpose their advice in treaties and alliances, though I deny it to be their right, this is an argument singly sufficient with me to support the Triennial Bill; for supposing a ministry shall at any time negotiate an alliance prejudicial to the interest of England, and by their artifice impose upon a parliament to approve and confirm it, is it not a peculiar happiness that such parliament will quickly have an end, and that the people have it in their own power by another, which must soon be called, to correct the misdeeds of such a ministry, and prevent the farther ill consequences of such a treaty to the nation?"† But the pretence about foreign powers was a shallow subterfuge; for the authors of the bill could not have forgotten that our allies, so little did they trouble themselves about the forms of our constitution, had on former occasions entered into treaties and alliances with the commonwealth.

Such were the principal arguments by which this memorable bill was defended and carried through both houses of the legislature. That they were all equally frivolous and hypocritical, cannot be denied even by those who regard the principle of septennial parliaments to be safer and sounder than that of triennial or any shorter period. If the bill had been destined to rely for support solely upon the cogency of the reasons assigned for its introduction, it must have been an utter and contemptible failure; but it was a government measure, originating in the embarrassments of an administration whose very existence depended upon the prolongation of parliament, and it was consequently sustained throughout all its stages by an overwhelming majority composed of adherents, placemen, and expectants. They were signally favoured by circumstances in

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 328.

† It happened, curiously enough, that in the very year in which this debate took place, a defensive alliance was entered into between England and the emperor of Germany, which was never even communicated to parliament.

this momentous struggle for life. Backed by the influence of the court, and cast by a fortuitous conjunction of events upon the protestant feelings of the country, they absorbed all the interest which belonged to a fortunate position. The accident of being opposed to the party of the Jacobites secured them at once a large measure of support, which they lost no opportunity of improving by flinging upon the Tories all the odium of the rebellion, and the disasters that followed it. How far the Tories deserved that odium has been seen. The great majority of that party repudiated jacobitism, and had actually taken an active part in the Revolution; but, exposed by their stringent doctrines of government to the imputation of being averse to the Hanoverian succession *, they were reduced to a practical dilemma, which at every turn gave fresh advantages to their antagonists. And it was through such a conflict of parties, and by such a combination of chances, that the Septennial Bill passed into a law.

Granting, however, that all the arguments which were employed in justification of that measure were valid, it yet remains a disputed question whether its authors had any right to give it a retrospective effect—whether they constitutionally possessed the right of applying the principle to the parliament which was then sitting. There can be no doubt of the right of parliament to repeal or alter old laws and pass new ones; but the right is purely prospective, except in such cases as indemnity bills, where the object is to confirm or acquit any action or proceeding that has already taken place. Parliament is clearly authorised to abrogate existing laws, but not to punish free men for having exercised the privileges guaranteed to them by those laws;

* The tory doctrine was, that all government was ordained of God, from whom alone princes derived their authority, and to whom alone they were responsible. The Revolution was obviously a direct infraction of this principle; and they endeavoured to reconcile their doctrines and their interest by setting up that famous distinction of a king *de facto* and a king *de jure*, which enabled them to yield a passive obedience to the monarch in possession, without, as they imagined, compromising a theory which that event destroyed for ever.

and the Septennial Act cannot be otherwise regarded than as a penal infliction, that deprived the electors of the benefit of the right they had exercised at the preceding election—a right which they derived under the then established laws of the country. The electors had returned that parliament for three years—the parliament elected itself for four years more; thus distinctly annulling the franchise which the constitution had conferred upon the people. Upon this view of the question, the opponents of the bill endeavoured in vain to arrest the headlong fury of the administration. "It may be objected," said Mr. Snell, "that when the people have once constituted the legislature, that the legislature is thereby vested with the whole power of their electors; and it cannot be denied but, generally speaking, it will hold true. And the people of England, having chosen us to represent them, we are thereby empowered not only to make laws, but to alter or repeal any law in being, as we shall think fit, for their benefit and security; and they will undoubtedly be bound thereby. But then this is to be understood where the subject matter of the laws we make is within compass of the trust which the people have, or may at least be supposed to delegate to us; and it is an ill way of reasoning to assert that we have a power to do what we cannot do without prejudice to those we represent. The right of electing representatives in parliament is inseparably inherent in the people of Great Britain, and can never be thought to be delegated to the representatives, unless *you will make the elected to be the elector.* And, at the same time, suppose it the will of the people that their representatives should have it in their power to destroy those that made them whenever a ministry shall think it necessary to screen themselves from their just resentments, this would be to destroy the fence to all their freedom; *for if we have a right to continue ourselves one year, one month, or day beyond our triennial term, it will unavoidably follow we have it in our power to make ourselves perpetual.*" *

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 329–30.

Mr. Archibald Hutcheson took the same line, in a speech distinguished by profound constitutional knowledge and logical acuteness. "If this bill," he declared, "were to enlarge only the continuance of future parliaments, I should give my negative to it, for the reasons I have already mentioned; and yet in that case the electors would have a fair warning for what time they were to choose, and those elected would be truly and properly the representatives of the people, which, I conceive, cannot be said of the present parliament, if they should be continued beyond the three years. This, to me, is an insuperable objection against this part of the bill; for if we may add four years to the present term, may we not add forty, — may we not make ourselves perpetual, *or even extinguish parliaments themselves?* Nay, what is it which we may not do,— or, after this step, what is it which the people of Britain may not apprehend that we will do? Can we do any thing much worse than to subvert one of the three estates of the realm, and to substitute a new one in the place thereof; and, instead of a house of commons by the choice of the people, as it always has been, and ever ought to be, to establish a new kind of house of commons, and till now unheard of, by act of parliament?" * Contending against the abuse of the vast power of parliament, the same speaker proceeded to express his opinion that even if the bill passed it would be null and void. "I cannot help being yet of opinion," he said, "that if it should go through all the forms of an act of parliament, pass both houses, and have the royal assent, that it will still remain a dead letter, and not obtain the force of a law; for I am warranted by one of our greatest lawyers to affirm, 'that an act of parliament may be void in itself.' And if there are any cases out of the reach of the legislature, this now before us must be admitted to be one; for what can be more against common sense and reason than to be a *felo de se*,—to destroy that constitu-

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 348.

tion, or any essential part thereof, upon which our existence in our political capacity depends?"* Innumerable instances might be supposed, and many might be cited, of cases in which acts of parliament would be of no authority in consequence of their extending the power of parliament beyond the legitimate bounds of legislation. Mr. Hutcheson reminded the house of some of these. "As, for instance, suppose, instead of the bill before us, we should pass a law, as was done in the reign of Richard II. (the worst prince that ever sat upon the English throne), that the power of both houses should be vested in twelve great lords!—or, as was done in the reign of Henry VIII. (the first proroguer of parliaments), that the king's proclamation, with the consent of the privy council, should have the force of law;—or, as in 1641, that the parliament should not be dissolved or prorogued without their own consents: such laws as these, through oppression and violence, have been for some time submitted to. But surely no gentleman will say that they ever were, or should they be now re-enacted they would be, legally in force; for if so, the parliament of 1641 is still in being, for I never heard that they gave their consents to their own dissolution."† Mr. Bromley also declared that he entertained a strong doubt whether the bill, after it had undergone the usual forms, would carry with it the obligation of a law. "The powers we are entrusted with, as representatives of the people, appear in the form of a writ, for summoning the parliament — [he here cited the words of the writ]. The question then is, whether the authority thus given us to act, touching the defence of the government, does enable us to lay aside one of the three great estates — the people — by denying them the right of acting by their representatives in parliament, and consequently their share in the legislature? Does the power put into our hands by the people justify our turning the dagger into the bowels of the constitution?

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 349. † Ibid. 350.

This doubt is increased by the notion that prevailed touching the invalidity of the statute of the 16th Car. 1. c. 7., whereby that parliament was not to be dissolved but by an act of parliament. No act of parliament was ever made for that purpose; which would certainly have been done, had the subsequent parliament thought that a law made in diminution of the people's interest in the legislature had been valid."*

It is not a little remarkable that these arguments in defence of the liberties of the people, which the supporters of the measure did not venture to combat, were urged by tories; while the measure which, in its immediate application to the parliament then sitting, annihilated their liberties, was the work of whigs. At this great inquest upon the electoral privileges of the nation the two great parties changed sides; and it was found, as it too frequently happens in despite of theories and pledges, that the ministerial section laboured to curtail popular rights, while the glory of vindicating them fell to the opposition. But this peculiarity may be observed, with few exceptions, through the whole current of English history, especially since the passing of this memorable bill, by which the people were removed to a greater distance than ever from all salutary participation in the affairs of legislation. The advocates of the people have generally been found in the opposition; or the opposition, rather, has been compelled to advocate the people as the only means of making a strong head out of doors against ministerial majorities within; while ministers, wielding the power of an unpopular parliament, have, even with the best intentions, generally forfeited the support of the nation. Nor is it likely ever to be otherwise, except in brief seasons of extraordinary excitement, so long as the Septennial Act continues in force. A return to short parliaments, by affording the people frequent opportunities of infusing fresh spirit into popular representation, can alone yield the only certain and permanent means of strengthening

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 334.

the hands of a government that really possesses the confidence of the nation.

A striking revolution of opinion respecting the Septennial Act afterwards took place amongst its supporters; for when the question of its repeal came under the consideration of parliament in the year 1734, of sixty-seven surviving members who had originally voted in favour of it, no less than thirty-five voted for its repeal; while of thirty who had formerly voted against it, only four were found, from motives of policy and unwillingness to disturb the existing system, to vote for its continuance.

The triumphant passage of this bill through both houses inspired the ministerial party with increased confidence, and threw the tories into despair. The opposition was so utterly prostrated that when, immediately afterwards, an act was brought in to repeal that clause in the Act of Settlement which restrained the king from going out of the kingdom, not one vote was recorded against it, although it was notoriously inimical to the feelings of the whole country. The victory of the whigs was complete; and the king, elated with the successes which had attended him in the field and the legislature, prorogued the parliament on the 26th of June, in a speech full of self-congratulation on the "mercies" he had shown to the faction of the Pretender, and the prospects of prosperity arising from "a settled government," concluding with the announcement of his intention to visit his German dominions in the recess; a step which excited the open jealousy of his English subjects, and threatened to involve his ministers in serious embarrassment.

CHAP. III.

1716, 1717.

THE PRINCE OF WALES APPOINTED LIEUTENANT DURING THE KING'S ABSENCE. — INCREASED DISCONTENT AT HOME. — CHANGES IN THE MINISTRY. — TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP WITH FRANCE. — SWEDISH CONSPIRACY TO INVADE ENGLAND. — ARREST OF THE PRINCIPAL CONFEDERATES. — SECRET CORRESPONDENCE RESPECTING THE PLOT LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT. — DEMAND FOR A SUPPLY TO REDUCE THE KING OF SWEDEN. — INDIGNATION OF THE INDEPENDENT SECTION OF THE COMMONS. — SILENCE OF WALPOLE. — THE MOTION CARRIED BY A MAJORITY OF FOUR. — DISMISSAL OF TOWNSHEND. — WALPOLE RESIGNS. — THE ADMINISTRATION IS DISSOLVED. — A NEW CABINET FORMED, AND THE WHIG PARTY BROKEN UP. — GERMAN POLICY OF THE SOVEREIGN UNIVERSALLY CENSURED. — RECRIMINATION BETWEEN THE WHIGS IN AND THE WHIGS OUT OF OFFICE. — FRESH OUTBREAKS OF JACOBITISM. — OXFORD PETITIONS TO BE BROUGHT TO TRIAL. — THE LORDS PROCEED WITHOUT THE COMMONS. — OXFORD ACQUITTED. — STATE OF THE COUNTRY.

Before his departure his majesty appointed the prince of Wales his guardian of the realm, and lieutenant during his absence; but not, however, until after he had been defeated by the privy council in an attempt to associate other persons in the commission.* Several promotions took place in the offices about the court, accompanied by disgraces equally unmerited and inexplicable. The duke of Argyle and his brother, the earl of Ilay, who had rendered the most important services to his majesty, were dismissed from all their appointments; even their votes in the lords, not to speak of their devotion throughout the contest with the Pretender, failing to propitiate the favour of their ungrateful so-

* Coxe. The eagerness exhibited by the prince to obtain the office of regent is said to have disgusted the king, who did not care to conceal his dislike of his royal highness on account of his personal popularity.

vereign. The only reason that has ever been assigned for this piece of gratuitous oppression was, that the duke, who, amongst a brilliant variety of honours, held the place of groom of the stole, was an especial favourite with the prince, which was quite enough to render him odious to the king.

During his majesty's absence, which continued for six months, the prince of Wales, to improve, no doubt, his influence with the country, set several prisoners at liberty, reprieved others, and performed several acts of toleration and generosity. The tories seized upon this prognostic of a more lenient policy, and attempted to get up numerous addresses to his royal highness, with the secret view of making a party instrument of the prince. Had the prince's own inclinations been consulted, this manœuvre must have succeeded; for he entertained no very good will towards his father, and would not have regretted any occasion that, without apparent connivance upon his part, should have had the effect of putting them both upon the country. But Walpole and Townshend were too wary to be tricked by so obvious a stratagem; and accordingly they prevailed, with great difficulty, on the prince to discourage all such addresses, and to express his desire that they should be made directly to the throne. The spirit of discontent, however, was beginning to revive in the provinces, especially in Oxford and Edinburgh; seditious sermons were preached; libels against the government published; and it was at last thought advisable that the king should return with all available expedition, and open the parliament.* But this determination was not acted upon until some sudden and unexpected changes were made in the administration at home. George I. was singularly unhappy in his treat-

* "The only remedy they can foresee for this (the addresses) and other growing evils is, what I had the honour to mention to you in my last, that his majesty should take the resolution of coming over to hold the parliament, and that it should be known immediately he has such an intention." — *Stephen Poyntz to Secretary Stanhope.* (See Correspondence in Coxe's Walpole.)

ment of his friends. Having dismissed the duke of Argyle, who had espoused his cause with so much ardour in the field of battle, he now displaced Townshend, who was labouring with all his skill to baffle the machinations of his enemies during his absence, from the office of secretary of state; appointing the duke of Roxburgh in his place, and softening the sentence of expulsion by sending the removed minister to Ireland. This extraordinary movement was adopted through the intrigues of the earl of Sunderland, who was travelling in Hanover under the pretence of ill health, and who contrived to inflame the German ministers, Bernstoff, Bothmar, and Robotun*, against Townshend and his colleague Walpole.

Before his majesty returned to England, he effected a treaty of friendship and alliance with the duke of Orleans, then regent of France, during the minority of Louis XV.; a measure which provoked considerable animadversion at home, where it was not easy to persuade the people that the protestant succession could derive much security from the interposition of a catholic power. This treaty, however, was only a part of the German policy of the king. The cession to Hanover of the duchies of Bremen and Verdun, which had been wrested from the Swedes by Denmark, was justly regarded by Sweden as a flagrant wrong, rendered still more insulting by the harassing proceedings of the English fleet in the Baltic. Charles XII., always inflammable and imprudent, resolved to take revenge; and, entering into a correspondence with the disaffected English, formed the

* Robotun was a French refugee, and originally secretary to Bernstoff. When Townshend was envoy to the States, he invited this Robotun to his table; and the reptile, charmed by a condescension to which he was little accustomed, took care afterwards, when George I. ascended the English throne, to recommend Townshend, the only English minister he knew, to the favour of his master. But as his influence increased, his sense of favours conferred diminished; and in the end he became instrumental to the removal of his former friend. Townshend appears to have been a person of easy disposition and limited capacity. "He had that sort of understanding," says lady W. Montagu, "which commonly makes men honest in the first part of their lives; they follow the instructions of their tutor, and, till somebody thinks it worth while to show them a new path, go regularly on in the road where they are set."— *Works*, vol. i. p. 108.

desperate project of an invasion of Great Britain. The treaty with France, reluctantly acceded to by the States-General, was simply a measure of precaution against any possible demonstration of this nature. The injury inflicted upon Sweden was to be defended by some means, and England was convulsed to her centre in order to secure to Hanover a petty accession of territory obtained by violence and annexed by fraud.

1717. Information of this conspiracy having reached his majesty*, his first precaution on his arrival in London in January was to seize the person of count Gyllenburg, the Swedish minister. General Wade, who was entrusted with this honourable enterprise, found the ambassador, when he entered his house at midnight, making up despatches, which he seized; and breaking open a scrutoire, sealed up all the papers he found, and put a guard upon the residence. In vain the count expostulated about the law of nations and the honour of kings. Bremen and Verdun were more valuable than either.

The foreign ministers, not knowing whose turn might come next, expressed their indignation at this outrage; but they were appeased by a plausible circular from the secretaries of state. The Spanish ambassador alone ventured to reiterate his dissatisfaction. He replied to the excuses of the court, that "he was sorry no other way could be found out for preserving the peace of his majesty's dominions, without arresting the person of a public minister, and seizing all his papers, which are the sacred repositories of the secrets of his master; and, in whatever manner these two facts may seem to be understood, they seem very sensibly to wound the law of nations."

This proceeding was rapidly followed by the arrest of

* "There were several conjectures," says Tindal, "of the means of this important discovery. Some affirmed that the king had notice long before of the design from France; others, that the discovery was owing to an intercepted letter from count Gyllenburg to the lord Duffus, prisoner in the Tower; and others, that lord Duffus revealed the conspiracy to a fellow prisoner, who betrayed the secret to government to obtain his pardon."

baron Görtz, the Swedish resident in Holland, who was known to be at the head of the conspiracy, and who, so far from disowning his share in the design, gloried in it, declaring that he was the projector of it; that he had provided ten thousand arms, and other necessaries, for the invasion of England; and that he considered himself to be amply justified by the conduct of the king, who had joined the confederacy against Sweden without having received the least provocation—who had assisted Denmark in subduing the duchies of Bremen and Verdun, and then purchased them of the usurper—and who had further sent a squadron of ships to the Baltic to assist the Danes and Russians against the Swedes. The papers seized on this occasion—in open violation of the respect due to the confidential character of the diplomatic service—consisting of an extensive correspondence between Gyllenburg, Görtz, Sparr, and others, revealed the whole conspiracy, and proved that the activity of the English government, whatever might be said of the manner in which it was exercised, had interfered just in time between the plotters and the consummation of the plot. Görtz was actually on his way to England when an intimation of the fate of his confederate reached him, and induced him to change his route; but he was closely tracked by the agents of king George, and at last fell into their hands at Arnheim.

On the 20th of February, the king opened the parliament in person; announced the alliance he had concluded with France and the States-General; lamented that the obstinate and inveterate rancour of a faction prevented him from following his own inclination by beginning the session with an act of grace; and then, suggesting the necessity of increasing the supplies to meet the exigency of a threatened invasion, laid before the house the correspondence he had captured in the strong box of Görtz's secretary.

The correspondence afforded a curious exposition of the sentiments, views, and projects of the enemies of

England and its dual-crowned sovereign, or rather of those who had become enemies of England through their just resentment towards the elector of Hanover. Of the actual peril in which the country was placed at the moment when the conspirators were seized, a general notion may be formed from a few striking passages in the letters. Towards the close of the preceding September we find Gyllenburg informing his friend Görtz that every body in England was of opinion that the regent of France aimed at the throne, and was desirous of purchasing it from king George, at any rate. "People go so far here," he says, "as to lay wagers that the young king of France will be despatched before a certain time to make room for his uncle." He then refers to a pamphlet he had written to "open the eyes" of the public; and adds, that he intends to "have several pieces ready against the meeting of the parliament, and to publish them by a little at a time, the impatience of the populace not suffering them to read long deductions." He goes on to say, that the intimations which had been made to him terminate in the bringing in of the Pretender; but that, as he could not enter upon that affair without express orders from his master, he had avoided coming to the particulars. Sanguine, however, of the result, he adds, "Ten thousand men, transported hither from Sweden, would do all the business; and, I believe, we shall not be at a loss for money." To all this Görtz answers by cautioning him not to allude to the intimations concerning the Pretender in his letters to the king or his Swedish correspondents; and requesting to be informed clearly *how* ten thousand men might do the business. Gyllenburg replies in detail, giving, amongst other statements, the following circumstantial explanations:—"There is no medium; either Bremen, or the Hanoverians, must be sacrificed. The latter is not so difficult, considering the general discontent. Ten thousand men would be sufficient. The malecontents require but a body of regular troops to which they may join themselves. That body, being transported in the

month of March, when the easterly winds reign, and when it will not in the least be dreamt on, will cause a general revolt. We must also have arms for between 15,000 and 20,000 men, and as many accoutrements as can be got; for, as to horses, we shall have them here. * * * Our men once landed, I will answer for the rest." In the next letter, he says, "I have since spoken with two of the principals, who have assured me that there shall be 60,000*l.* sterling ready as soon as I shall show them a line from the king, with assurances, under his own hand, that he will assist them."

On the 4th of November, he enters upon an examination of the policy, apparently suggested by Görtz, of endeavouring by the sacrifice of Bremen to induce the English ministry to assist Sweden in taking an equivalent from the czar. This method of balancing the loss he thinks the ministry would be well inclined to approve of, and that they might even be brought to an agreement as to what the Swedes ought to take from the czar by way of reprisal for their losses in Germany. But, notwithstanding these hopes of prevailing over the corruption of the administration, he still distrusts them, and fears that the power they possess over "the mercenary parliament" may render them stubborn. "The English ministers," he says, "do not mince the matter; and they have already made it appear that they will stick at nothing: they are all furious persons. Sunderland, who is in a manner at the head of affairs, and who has got all the interest he has with the king of England by having consented to what has been done against us (being besides our enemy), is at present at Hanover, to take his instructions from the Germans, and your excellency may depend upon it he will execute them with all the boldness imaginable." The wary ambassador, therefore, concludes that the best course is to enter into measures against a "people who certainly will do nothing by halves: we must either ruin them, or be undone ourselves; that is, if it be in their power to bring it to pass." In the course of the subsequent corre-

spondence, Görtz details the progress of his intrigues with the court of Avignon for a loan to enable him to carry his design into effect, and urges upon Gyllenburg the imperative necessity of raising a further supply amongst the disaffected in England. It appears, however, that the friends of the Pretender would not engage in the affair upon any ground of restitution to Sweden, lest it might weaken their own cause; and that the only object by which they would allow themselves to be interested was the establishment of the rights of the Pretender. A difficulty seems to have arisen out of this stipulation. The English malecontents were desirous to engage the assistance of Sweden, and ready to advance money to promote the invasion, on condition that it should be employed for no other purpose than that for which they designed it. "If you act otherwise," observed one of their leaders to Gyllenburg, "you will destroy the credit of the chevalier de St. George here, which perhaps will be of necessary use to you, and you will make his adherents your implacable enemies; for if their design fail, they will be regardless whether Sweden perishes or not." But Görtz met all these cautious preliminaries by showing that it was quite as much the interest of Sweden to destroy the power of king George, as it was of the adherents of the Pretender, and that, in fact, their ultimate views were identical. "I cannot reconcile the opinion," he says, on the 11th of December to Gyllenburg, "which your friend seems to have of the good faith of the king, and his interest, with the fear, which is nevertheless shown, that we have no other end than to procure to ourselves the restitution of the duchy of Bremen. Pray, sir, which way can the king of Sweden better secure himself the recovery and possession of his said duchy, than by reducing king George to be nothing more than an elector of the empire?" This argument evidently succeeded. A sum of 20,000*l.* was remitted into France. The friends of the cause in Paris were so charmed with the whole design, that they advanced Görtz 100,000

livres, promising to make it up to one million of guilders; and every part of the machinery for the descent upon England was ready, when the arrest of the principal confederates paralysed the scheme on the very eve of accomplishment.*

Having thus detected an extensive but ill-arranged conspiracy against the Hanoverian succession, it became necessary to obtain the means of punishing the king of Sweden; and accordingly a royal message was delivered by secretary Stanhope, on 4th of April, to the house of commons, asking for a supply, to enable his majesty to reduce the king of Sweden; urging, in addition, the "confidence they ought to repose in the king's honour, wisdom, and economy in the management of what money should be thought necessary for that service." The manner, as well as the substance of this message, excited a degree of indignation for which ministers were wholly unprepared, and proved that the parliament was not altogether so "mercenary" as Gyllenburg suspected. Shippen declared that it was a great misfortune his majesty "was as little acquainted with the usage and forms of parliamentary proceedings, as with the language of our country; that if he had known either, he would not have sent such a message, which, he was sure, was unparliamentary and unprecedented; and therefore it was his opinion that it was penned by some foreign minister, and then translated into English." Mr. Hungerford observed, that "it must needs be very surprising to the whole world that a nation, not along ago the terror of France and Spain, should now seem to fear so inconsiderable an enemy as the king of Sweden." Stanhope vehemently replied, that in his opinion "none would refuse compliance with the message but such as either were not the king's friends, or who distrusted the honesty of his ministers;" an insinuation which Mr. Lawson repelled by observing, that he was "surprised to find such unguarded expressions fall from that worthy

* Papers relative to the intended invasion from Sweden. Parl. Hist. vol. vii. 396—421.

and honourable gentleman, for whom, he was sure, the whole house had a very great regard; but since he had thought fit to speak so openly, he hoped he might be well justified in saying, that if every member of that house that used freedom of speech on any subject of debate must be accounted an enemy to the king when he happened not to fall in with his ministers, he knew no service they were capable of doing for their country in that house; and therefore it was his opinion that they had nothing else to do but to retire to their country seats, and leave the king and his ministers to take what they pleased." Against this outraged spirit the motion struggled through the commons; and after a violent debate, during which Walpole, incensed at the nonfulfilment of the promises of favour that had been made to him and Townshend, and chagrined at the growing ascendency of Sunderland and Stanhope, maintained a profound silence, a grant of 250,000*l.* was voted by an ominous majority of *four*. That evening Townshend was dismissed from the lieutenancy of Ireland.*

This party proceeding broke up the administration. On the following morning Walpole requested an audience, and tendered his resignation. The king refused to accept it; and, taking up the seals which Walpole had laid down, replaced them in his hat. But Walpole's resolution was not to be shaken: he again laid the seals upon the table, urging the impossibility of his remaining in office without sacrificing his reputation. Ten times the king returned the seals, but Walpole as often put them down again on the table. At last his majesty gave up the contest: they were both deeply affected, and parted in tears. †

Devonshire, Orford, Methuen, and Pulteney followed the example of Walpole, and resigned. A new administration was constructed, consisting of Stanhope, as first lord of the treasury and chancellor of the exchequer;

* Coxe's Walpole. † Ibid.

Sunderland and Addison, secretaries of state; earl of Berkley, first lord of the admiralty; duke of Kingston, privy seal; and the duke of Newcastle, lord chamberlain. Townshend was replaced by the duke of Bolton.

The retirement of Walpole, whose talents for finance were admitted on all hands, produced an extraordinary sensation in and out of parliament. At the very moment when he resigned he was engaged in a scheme for the reduction of the national debt, which was so ably digested that it completely disarmed the opposition, and was received with universal approbation *; but being no longer in office, the task of fulfilling his project devolved upon his incompetent successors to the undisguised consternation of both sides of the house. Some people asserted that he resigned at this critical juncture solely for the sake of embarrassing the king, in order that he might force him to comply with his unreasonable demands; but there was a sufficient excuse for his defection in the German policy of the sovereign, which, to secure a contemptible acquisition of territory to the kingdom of Hanover, threatened to involve England in a tedious and profligate war. It was justly observed by several members of the commons, that no occasion whatever existed for entering into foreign alliances to defend Great Britain, and that there was already a greater force, naval and military, at the disposal of the country, than could be required to crush the entire available strength of Sweden. Even the speaker declared that no additional burthens were necessary; and that if the sum demanded were expended for the safety

* When Walpole was placed at the head of the treasury the national debt amounted to fifty millions, in some cases bearing an interest of eight per cent., and in none less than six, although the common interest of money had been reduced in the previous reign to five per cent. Part of this debt was redeemable, and part irredeemable; the former being provided for by parliament, with a certain redeemable interest. Walpole proposed to discharge and to convert the latter, with the consent of the proprietors, into a perpetual annuity not exceeding five per cent., to be redeemable by parliament. The surpluses arising from the reduction of interest, and from the excesses of the taxes appropriated to the payment of the interest, he further proposed to form into a sinking fund for the discharge of the principal of the debt. This was the first resolution that ever was taken in parliament to raise or establish a general sinking fund.

of England abroad, a proportion of the army, equal to the amount of the expenditure, ought to be disbanded at home. Walpole had an ample vindication in these circumstances for abandoning an administration whose foreign policy was of so anti-national a complexion.

By these secessions the whig party was split into two divisions; some continuing to support the government, and others following Walpole, and occasionally acting in conjunction with the tories. The old friendship between Stanhope and Walpole was displaced by jealousy and resentment, which speedily broke out into open contention. In a debate on certain proposals submitted to the house of commons by the South Sea Company and the Bank of England for the reduction of the national debt, Pulteney remarked, that "he did not know what advantages some persons might have in accepting the proposal of the South Sea Company;" an insinuation which Stanhope regarded as a personal reflection upon himself, and to which he replied by an acknowledgment of his "incapacity for the affairs of the treasury, which were so remote from his studies and inclination; that therefore he would fain have kept the employment he had before, which was both more easy and more profitable to him; but that he thought it his duty to obey the king's commands; that, however, he would endeavour to make up by application, honesty, and disinterestedness what he wanted in abilities and experience; that he would content himself with the salary and lawful perquisites of his office; and though he had quitted a better place, he would not quarter himself upon any body to make it up; that he had no brothers, nor other relations, to provide for; and that, upon entering into the treasury, he had made a standing order against the late practice of making reversions of places. * The application of these innuendos to Wal-

* Stanhope never appeared to be satisfied with his own conduct in office, as if he distrusted his own capacity, or his want of that flexibility of principle which the circumstances of the times required. Professor Whiston relates of him, that one day, after remaining for a long time in a musing posture, he suddenly exclaimed, in a kind of agony, "Now I am convinced that a man cannot set his foot over the threshold of a court but he must become a rogue."

pole could not be mistaken, and the answer they provoked teemed with the bitterest asperity. Walpole began by complaining of breach of friendship, and the betrayal of private conversations. He frankly owned that "while he was in employment he had endeavoured to serve his friends and relations, than which, in his opinion, nothing was more reasonable or more just; that as to the granting reversions, he was willing to acquaint the house with the meaning of it; that he had no objection against the German ministers his majesty had brought over from Hanover, and who, as far as he had observed, had all along behaved themselves like men of honour; but that there was a mean fellow *, of what nation he could not tell, who took upon him to dispose of employments; that this man having obtained the grant of a reversion designed for his son, he (Walpole) thought it too good for him, and therefore kept it for his own son; that thereupon that foreigner was so saucy as to demand of him the sum of 2500*l.*, under pretence that he had been offered so much for the said reversion, but that he was wiser than to comply with his demand; and that one of the chief reasons that made him resign his place was, because he could not connive at some things that were carrying on." Stanhope retorted with increased violence, and an angry altercation ensued; when Mr. Hungerford interposed, expressing his regret that these "two great men should fall foul on one another;" but adding, that the unlucky accident had produced some good, since it had revealed the scandalous practice of selling places and reversions, and ending by moving that the member who made the discovery should be called upon to name the person. As nobody seconded the motion, however, it fell to the ground; but before the house adjourned, the speaker was formally required to lay his command on both members that they would take no further notice of what had passed.

* This was Robotun, the refugee, who first courted and then betrayed Townshend.

. The measures of ministers throughout the session, stigmatised by their new opponents, and failing from want of innate vigour and popular confidence, gave fresh pretexts for tumults and demonstrations of jacobitism. Oaken boughs were publicly displayed on the 29th of May, and white roses worn on the 10th of June, the birthday of the Pretender. Oxford was rampant with disaffection, while Cambridge was busy in getting up addresses of congratulation and allegiance. The two universities, always opposed in politics, never exhibited their antagonism with such outrageous fervour; and the king did not fail in proportion to mark his sense of their contrasted principles. Preferments were showered upon his supporters in the latter, and expulsions and disgrace followed his enemies in the former; and while the loyalty of Cambridge was rewarded by a munificent present of books, the disorders of Oxford were visited with a strong military force.* The collisions and outrages that followed were productive of extended horrors. The cry of "The Church and Sacheverell" was revived; the meeting-houses of the sectaries were attacked, and in many instances demolished; and the confusion which prevailed throughout the country afforded an apology for arming the executive with fresh powers of coercion. The Riot Act was the result; and by this famous bill it was declared to be felony for more than twelve persons to remain assembled more than one hour after it had been publicly read by a magistrate.

These circumstances were not lost upon Oxford, who, after pining in the Tower for nearly two years, believed

* The following epigram was written on this occasion by Dr. Trapp: —

"Our royal master saw with heedful eyes
The wants of his two universities;
Troops he to Oxford sent, as knowing why
The learned body wanted loyalty;
But books to Cambridge gave, as well discerning
How that right loyal body wanted learning."

To this piece of wit, sir William Browne is said to have replied in an impromtu to the following effect: —

"The king to Oxford sent a troop of horse,
For tories know no argument but force;
With equal care to Cambridge books he sent,
For whigs allow no force but argument."

that the time was come when he might venture to throw himself fearlessly upon the humanity of the legislature. Walpole, his most formidable enemy, was out of office; the whigs were divided amongst themselves; and the government were not in a condition to peril their popularity by any measures of unnecessary severity. He accordingly petitioned the lords to take his case into consideration, giving an outline of the various hinderances and delays that had from time to time prevented parliament from proceeding with the impeachment, and concluding with an expression of his reliance on their justice, as it could not be "their intention that his confinement should be indefinite." After some discussion, a day was appointed for the trial in Westminster Hall; the earl Cowper, as before, presiding in the capacity of high steward. The case was opened by Mr. Hampden, one of the managers for the commons; and when the articles were read, sir Joseph Jekyll, on the part of the commons, rose to make good the first article of the impeachment; but was interrupted by lord Harcourt, who stated that he had a motion to submit before the proceedings went any farther, whereupon their lordships adjourned to their own house. The substance of lord Harcourt's motion was, that it was needless to go through the whole impeachment; for if the commons could make good the two articles of high treason, the earl of Oxford would forfeit both life and estate, and there would be an end of the matter. This motion was defended on the ground that the investigation of all the articles would prolong the trial to a great length, which would be a hardship on a peer who had already suffered so long an imprisonment. Lord Parker opposed it, because "in all courts of judicature it is the usual and constant method to go through all the evidence before judgment be given upon any part of the accusation; and that, although the house of peers was the supreme court of the kingdom, it had ever a regard to the supreme court of equity, and even to the forms observed in the courts below." The motion, however, was carried by a

majority of eighty-eight voices against fifty-six; and a message was transmitted to the commons announcing the result. The commons refused to proceed in the order prescribed by the lords, and demanded a free conference. The lords refused the conference, proceeded to trial without the commons, and acquitted the prisoner. This indignity was resented by the lower house in an address to the crown, praying that the earl of Oxford should be excepted from the Act of Grace, which was easily granted to save appearances, but no further measures were ever taken against his lordship. The Act of Grace, which passed this session, liberated all the remaining prisoners; after the lords Derwentwater and Kenmure had suffered the extreme penalty of the law, and others had been sent as slaves to the plantations, or had expired in their dungeons, for the very same offences which were thus liberally pardoned in the survivors. But there was this difference in their cases, that those who suffered had been brought to trial while the royal vengeance was hot, while the rest had been allowed to lie in prison until it cooled. Justice had nothing to do with these dispensations of punishment and pardon. It was necessary to make an example, and examples, at all times, are sacrifices to expediency in the forms of law. The Act of Grace, however, unhallowed by a solitary attribute of real magnanimity, enabled the king, in his speech from the throne at the close of the session, to boast of his clemency and indulgence. But the people were still dissatisfied. The session had been unproductive of a single solid benefit to the country; foreign influences prevailed at court, — the whigs were divided, — disaffection had again made itself manifest, —a plot had been detected, which left its bitterness, like dregs, behind, — and it was universally felt that the industry of England was unduly taxed to support the anti-national schemes of the monarch.

CHAP. IV.

1717—1719.

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE KING AND THE PRINCE OF WALES. — THE PRINCE BANISHED FROM THE PALACE. — STANDING ARMY REDUCED. — WALPOLE IN VAIN ENDEAVOURS TO OBTAIN A FARTHER REDUCTION. — SHIPPEN COMMITTED TO THE TOWER. — STANDARD OF GOLD COIN FIXED. — PROJECT SET ON FOOT TO ASSASSINATE THE KING. — INCREASE OF THE NAVAL FORCE. — DEATH OF CHARLES XII. — INTRIGUES OF CARDINAL ALBERONI FOR THE RECOVERY OF THE SPANISH PROVINCES DISMEMBERED BY THE TREATY OF UTRECHT. — RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN POWERS IN THESE AFFAIRS. — THE SPANIARDS REDUCE THE ISLAND OF SARDINIA. — QUADRUPLE ALLIANCE. — SPAIN AGAIN SACRIFICED TO THE HANOVERIAN POLICY OF THE KING. — THE SPANIARDS INVADE SICILY. — AN ENGLISH FLEET IS DESPATCHED TO THE MEDITERRANEAN. — ADMIRAL BYNG OBTAINS A DECISIVE VICTORY. — SPAIN MAKES REPRISALS. — WAR DECLARED AGAINST SPAIN BY ENGLAND AND FRANCE. — CHANGES IN THE ADMINISTRATION. — BILL BROUGHT FORWARD FOR THE RELIEF OF THE DISSENTERS. — HOADLEY'S SERMON ON THE CHURCH. — STRUGGLE OF THE BISHOPS TO EXCLUDE THE DISSENTERS. — PEERAGE BILL MOVED AND WITHDRAWN. — PROROGATION OF PARLIAMENT.

It was the peculiar misfortune of this reign to exhibit, in the domestic life of the court, the same wilfulness and injustice by which its public policy, foreign and domestic, was so unhappily distinguished. His majesty regarded the prince of Wales with aversion, partly on account of his attachment to his mother, and partly on account of his English popularity. The accouchement of the princess of Wales, at the palace of St. James's, in the November of this year, afforded the king a fresh opportunity of inflicting an indignity upon his son. The prince, it appeared, was desirous that the duke of York should be one of the godfathers of the infant; but the king overruled his wish, and appointed the

duke of Newcastle to officiate at the ceremony. This arbitrary interference in a matter that so nearly concerned his feelings, provoked his royal highness into a sudden expression of resentment against the duke; and his words being conveyed to the king, his majesty, in a spirit of tyranny better becoming a German than a British sovereign, ordered the prince to keep his own apartments until his further pleasure should be made known. His "further pleasure" banished him from the palace altogether; and his royal highness, accompanied by the princess, took up his residence at the house of the earl of Grantham; while his children, by the king's order, were kept in St. James's. Shortly afterwards a royal intimation was given to all peers, privy councillors, and their families, that such persons as should think proper to visit the prince and princess of Wales should be prohibited from coming into his majesty's presence, while every individual who held appointments in both households were commanded to relinquish one service or the other.* This species of despotism was new in England — abhorrent to the spirit of a free constitution, and admirably adapted, accordingly, to render his majesty more obnoxious than ever to his subjects.

Nor did the acts of the administration help to diminish this sentiment. The parliament was opened on the 21st of November, with a speech in which the reduction of the army by one half was exultingly announced, and closed by another speech, in which an addition to the navy was demanded for the preservation of "the peace of Europe." Walpole said that "this pacific address had violently the air of a declaration of war."

The session was remarkable for the assertion of popular principles on the part of those who had no power to carry them into practice, and for unpopular measures on the part of those who had. Notwithstanding the reduction that had been effected in the army, a standing force of 16,347 men was forced upon the house of commons. Walpole attempted to reduce the number to

* Tindal.

12,000, and offered the alternative of diminishing the expenditure by taking off the allowances to general officers, which formed a large portion of it. Shippen opposed the grant in a speech of great power. He asserted that a standing army in time of peace was an impediment to the free execution of the laws; and that, so far from being necessary to the protection of the country, it was inconsistent with its safety; that his majesty's speech was to be considered as the composition and advice of his ministry; and that the house was at liberty to debate every proposition in it, especially those that seemed rather calculated for the meridian of Germany than of Great Britain; that his majesty was unacquainted with our language and our constitution; and that, as other nations had lost their liberties by the dangerous experiment of maintaining a larger number of forces than was absolutely necessary, we were justified in taking warning by their example. This intrepid resistance to the government was not to be endured. Shippen's words were taken down; and upon the motion of Mr. Lechmere, the utterer of them was committed to the Tower. Freedom of speech was extinguished in the person of honest Shippen.*

The secret disaffection of a large section of the people was naturally inflamed by acts of such superfluous violence. The strength of the tories lay chiefly amongst the upper classes and the populations of the

* Notwithstanding the committal of Shippen, there were not wanting independent members to oppose the principle of a standing army. Mr. Jefferies observed that, "by keeping up such a number of forces, who may, when they are disposed, controul the power of the civil magistrate, the strength and security of our constitution is at an end, and that we have no other rule of government left than will and pleasure. The notion I have of slavery is, the being subjected to the will of another; and notwithstanding the rod be not always on my back, or the dragoon in my house, yet if it is not in my power to prevent its being so, I am no longer free." Sir Thomas Hanmer said, that "the true and only support of an English prince does and ought to consist in the affections of his people;" that "whoever advises his majesty to aim at any additional security to himself from a standing army, instead of increasing his strength, does really diminish it, by robbing him of the hearts of his subjects. There are but two ways of governing; the one by force, and the other by the affections of the people governed: it is impossible for any prince to have them both. He must choose which of the two he will stick to, for he can have but one. If he is master of their affections, he stands in no need of force; and if he will make use of force, it is in vain for him to expect their affections"

large towns; that of the whigs amongst the dissenters and the monied interest. The administration depended upon the assistance of the Bank, and the South Sea Company, and other wealthy bodies that were willing to advance loans on government security; and the opposition relied upon the independent and industrial orders, whose interests were directly compromised by arbitrary measures and heavy burthens. These diverging lines led to results that might have been easily foreseen; and while the crown was issuing a proclamation for fixing the current value of gold*, a design was forming to assassinate the king. James Sheppard, a youth under nineteen years of age, the apostle of this treason, was not so much the representative of a conspiracy,—for it did not appear that he had any confederates,—as of the general discontent. He had early imbibed strict doctrines concerning monarchical rights, was devoted to the cause of the Pretender, and regarded the king as an usurper. Confiding his views to a nonjuring clergyman, he offered to undertake the death of his majesty. The clergyman was alarmed, betrayed him to the magistrates; and Sheppard died on the scaffold, refusing to make any defence or confession, and glorying in his principles and his project, which he declared had occupied his mind for three years.

1718. Parliament was prorogued on the 21st of March; the king observing in his speech that he "could not put an end to the session without returning his hearty thanks

* This proclamation was adopted in consequence of the great scarcity of silver, occasioned by the exportation of that metal to the East Indies and other parts, and the importation of gold. Sir Isaac Newton, master of the mint, made an elaborate report on the subject to the lords of the treasury, which was submitted to parliament. It was thought that the lowering the value of gold would produce a greater circulation of silver, but during the recess it had the contrary effect: either through the avarice of capitalists, who hoarded up silver, hoping it would rise still higher, or from the fear that gold would be lowered still more; or through the intrigues of the enemies of the government, who succeeded in creating an opposition to the measure amongst the lower orders, on account of the impediments it threw in the way of all kinds of retail business. By this proclamation all persons were prohibited from uttering or receiving guineas at any greater or higher value than one-and-twenty shillings, and all other gold coins in proportion. Guineas were originally coined at the value of twenty shillings each; but they had risen, in consequence of the scarcity of silver, to the current value of one-and-twenty shillings and sixpence.

to *so good* a parliament, for the despatch which had been given to the public business." The flattery was gross, because the parliament had transacted very little business; and because the despatch which was so agreeable to his majesty was not a display of zeal in the public service, but of servility to the administration. . . It was the conspicuous merit of that session to despatch its business by majorities that prevented discussion, with the incidental help of the speaker's warrant to punish any inconvenient boldness of speech.

The real motives for the increase of the naval force were gradually developed in the recess, and the shrewd conjecture of Walpole proved to be too well founded. The Swedish plot, it is true, was at an end. Görtz had been silently released, and Gyllenburg sent home by an exchange. These ministers were no sooner at liberty than they resumed their project, and brought it even nearer to its consummation that it had been before. The czar, disappointed in the long-cherished design of forming a settlement in Germany, as a prince of the empire — which was equally resisted by the courts of Copenhagen and Berlin — withdrew himself from his alliance with Denmark and Austria, and, to the astonishment of Europe, acceded to the preliminaries of a convention with his ancient enemy, the king of Sweden, whose throne he had shaken to its foundations, with whom he had been waging a sanguinary war for a period of twenty years, and whom he had driven out of his own dominions at the point of the sword. The dexterous Görtz was the artful instrument of this coalition, which, commencing in a vague profession of mutual defence, terminated in a definite pledge to elevate the Pretender to the throne of England. How this dangerous league might have resulted in its effects upon England, or upon the more extensive interests of Germany, it is difficult to imagine; but the usual good luck of George I. preserved him from the peril which thus threatened him. While the plan was approaching the moment of execution, the heroic, reckless, and unfor-

tunate Charles was killed in the trenches before Frederickshall in Norway; and by this accidental, or, as some persons have asserted, preconcerted shot, the invasion of England was averted — Russia was cast upon other devices — Sweden was thrown into convulsions — and Görtz, the prime agent of the intrigue, was consigned to the block.*

Görtz had no sooner vanished from the scene than a still more formidable agitator appeared in Spain in the person of the wily and ambitious cardinal Alberoni, the prime minister of Philip V. Alberoni has been justly described as a man of lofty and aspiring genius, delighting in rash projects, crafty in intrigue, comprehensive in design, and possessed of indefatigable energy. The object to which he now directed his attention was the re-annexation to the Spanish monarchy of those kingdoms and provinces of which she had been divested by the treaty of Utrecht. In order to render clear the motives and the policy of the cardinal, a brief statement of the relative circumstances of the principal powers involved in his proceedings is indispensable.

The emperor of Germany had not yet invested the king of England with the possession of Bremen and Verdun, which was necessary to confer a valid title upon the purchase; and, although his majesty had now held these places for several years, he still continued in vain to apply to the emperor for his sanction. The reluctance of the court of Vienna to assent to that distribution of territory arose from an anxiety to recover Sicily, which the emperor desired to add to his other Italian dominions. By the treaty of Utrecht, Naples and Sar-

* "Never was man," says Voltaire, "at the same time so supple and so audacious; so full of resources in disgrace; so vast in his designs; so active in his measures. Affrighted at no end, hesitating at no means, he was prodigal of gifts and promises, of oaths, of truth, and of falsehood. He was a man capable of overturning the political system of Europe, and he had conceived the idea of effecting it. That monarch who, at the age of twenty, had issued his commands to count Piper, now submitted to receive lessons from baron Görtz." He did more: he placed himself entirely at his disposal, literally delegating to him, in a special commission, full powers to treat and conclude all matters in his name, pledging himself with his royal word to ratify all his acts.

dinia were ceded to Austria, together with Milan and the Low Countries; and the rich island of Sicily was conferred on the duke of Savoy, with the title of king. The emperor delayed the recognition of the purchase of Bremen and Verdun, in the hope of making terms for the acquisition of Sicily; and, on the other hand, Spain, equally dissatisfied with the arrangements of the treaty, resolved to obtain restitution from the emperor by force. The case was thus stated by the marquis of Grimaldi in a circular letter to the ambassadors of the various foreign courts. "Greatness of soul," he observed, "made his majesty bear the dismemberment of his dominions, which the plenipotentiaries would sacrifice to the tranquillity of Europe. After which he persuaded himself that these stipulated sacrifices would at least have secured him the rest of this nation, as glorious as afflicted. But no sooner had he complied with the surrender of Sicily in favour of the repose of Spain, upon the condition of the evacuation of Catalonia and the island of Majorca, than he found that the orders received for that purpose were concealed; and when at last it came to the knowlege of his allies, it was pretended that the treaty should be executed, by virtue whereof his majesty demanded the evacuation of the places. Nothing was more easy for that purpose than for the garrisons of the archduke * to have surrendered to the king's troops the gates of the places they possessed, in the same manner as was reciprocally practised among the potentates of Europe. But, quite on the contrary, the generals of the archduke, violating the public faith of treaties, and the reciprocal engagements, abandoned the places to the Catalans, making them at the same time believe that they would soon return, and thereby fomented their disquiet and rebellious spirit so far as to induce them to think of a furious and obstinate resistance." The moment chosen by cardinal Alberoni to attempt the recovery of these

* No treaty had been exchanged between Spain and the emperor subsequently to the war of the succession, and neither potentate acknowledged the title of his rival. Thus the emperor was contemptuously designated by the imperious Spaniard as the *archduke*.

possessions was when the arms of the emperor were engaged in a war with the Ottoman Porte, who had commenced hostilities for the conquest of the Morea, ceded to the Venetians by the treaty of Carlowitz. The conduct of Spain in this transaction, however it may have been justified in one point of view by the injustice with which she had been treated, was in open violation of repeated assurances given to the pope, that she would not only avoid embarrassing the emperor while he was engaged in a cause which Europe regarded as the cause of Christianity, but that, if necessary, she would even assist the Venetians against the Turks. M. de Grimaldi, indeed, did not hesitate to avow that his master seized upon the occasion as being favourable to his design. "His catholic majesty," he said, "looked upon the war with the Turks to have opened to him a gate of revenge in recovering those territories which had been usurped from him by the archduke." And this frank admission was contained in a diplomatic announcement of the intentions of Spain addressed to the representatives of the European powers. The pope shook off the Spaniard with indignation, and cleared himself of all participation in his perfidy by a public declaration of vehement resentment at an act which violated the neutrality to which the pontiff had pledged himself, in the name and upon the solemn promises of the court of Madrid.

Alberoni was as prompt to enter upon hostilities as to threaten them. In July, 1717, he equipped a formidable armament, which, sailing from Barcelona, descended upon the island of Sardinia, and speedily reduced it. The emperor appealed to the sovereigns of Europe; and the king of Spain, affecting a willingness to submit the quarrel to arbitration, the whole affair was referred to the king of England and the regent of France, in concert with the States-General. But the interest of Spain could not have got into more unfriendly hands. The king of England was too anxious to propitiate the emperor on account of his Hanoverian dominions not to sympathise with his demands; and the issue was even more

injurious to Spain than could have been expected. Conferences were opened at Vienna, terminating in the quadruple alliance, which was concluded in July, 1718, at London. By this alliance — the most formidable, perhaps, in the annals of history — one injustice was obliterated by another, and Spain was again sacrificed to the ambition of Germany and the purchase money of two petty duchies. The treaty agreed to by the alliance decided that Sardinia, then actually in the possession of Spain, should be transferred to the house of Savoy, and that Sicily should be given to the emperor. Thus Spain lost what she had gained by conquest, without obtaining any indemnity whatever for those provinces which had been ceded away from her by treaty; the powers who framed this treaty quietly soothing their consciences by declaring in the preamble that the article by which Sicily had been ceded to the house of Savoy was not essential to the treaty, and that it might justly be altered, even without the consent of the parties concerned, because it tended to the perfection of the treaty!. The regent of France, notwithstanding his hatred of the house of Austria, easily fell into this arrangement; because it gratified his personal animosity against the king of Spain, and helped to secure the friendship of England. He afterwards, from similar motives, consented to the aggrandisement of Hanover at the expense of Sweden, in the hope of detaching England from the Austrian interest. The arbitration, and the proceedings to which it led, present a very complete *imbroglio* of mean and sinister intrigues on all sides.

The immediate result of the treaty was a fresh movement on the part of Alberoni, more vigorous and desperate than the former. A force of thirty thousand men was despatched for the invasion of Sicily, under the command of the marquis de Lede; and landing in the island without much resistance, they speedily invested the capital. The king of England, of all the powers who were parties to the quadruple alliance, alone resolved to interfere. No reasonable pretext could be

made for a hostile interposition on the part of Great Britain; and when an account of the contest came afterwards to be submitted to parliament (for these events occurred during the recess), the grounds on which his majesty reposed the imaginary necessity of the case were the vindication of the faith of treaties, and the maintenance of the trade of his subjects; — the treaties referred to being acts of unwarrantable violence against Spain; and the trade of English merchants being in no greater degree affected by the invasion of Sicily, than it must inevitably have been by any other independent quarrel amongst the nations of Europe. But the motive by which his majesty was influenced was paramount in his estimation to all other considerations. He calculated upon the subserviency of the commons; and the result proved that he, or his advisers, were but too well acquainted with the corrupt materials of which that body was composed.

A powerful fleet, under the command of sir George Byng, was fitted out for the Mediterranean. The instructions of the admiral were elaborate and explicit. He was to endeavour, by all pacific means in his power, to mediate between both parties; but if the Spaniards persisted in a show of hostility, he was, at any risk, to defend the territories of the emperor. Arrived off Cadiz, sir George Byng transmitted a copy of his instructions to cardinal Alberoni. "Let him execute them," was the passionate answer of the minister. He accordingly cast anchor in the bay of Naples, where his squadron attracted the admiration of thousands of spectators who crowded the beach to gaze upon the magnificent spectacle.

Messina had now nearly fallen before the victorious arms of the invader. The English admiral, obtaining intelligence of the extremity to which the city was reduced, weighed anchor, and made sail for Sicily. As soon as he came in sight of the Faro of Messina, he despatched a message to the marquis de Lede, proposing a cessation of arms for two months, to give the powers

of Europe time to negotiate a peace. The reply of the Spanish general was characteristic of the proud blood of his country. "I have no power," he said, "to treat of an armistice; but shall obey my orders, which are to reduce Sicily to the dominion of my master the king of Spain." In two days the Spanish fleet formed into order of battle off the coast of Calabria; but as the British squadron approached, they bore away, with the design, probably, of inducing a running fight, and scattering the ships of the enemy. But the skilful manœuvres of the English commander soon forced them into close action, and before sunset he achieved a complete victory, destroying nearly the whole fleet, and taking prisoners four of the Spanish admirals. A division of the Spanish vessels having escaped, Sir George Byng commissioned captain Walton to pursue them with five ships of the line. The result of that officer's undertaking was communicated in the following laconic epistle:—"Sir, we have destroyed all the Spanish ships and vessels which were upon the coast, as per margin." The margin exhibited a catalogue of thirteen vessels of various descriptions.

The failure of the enterprise was in a great measure to be attributed to the erroneous disposition of battle selected by the commander-in-chief. Rear-admiral Cammock, an Irish officer in the Spanish service, suggested that the fleet should remain in the road of Paradise, under the shelter of the forts, with their broadsides to the sea, where the rapid currents would have prevented the possibility of the sudden or close approach of the enemy. But this advice was rejected, and the day was lost. Admiral Byng was amply rewarded for his success, and amongst other honours was raised to the peerage with the title of viscount Torrington.

The whole proceeding was denounced, with great justice, by the court of Madrid, as a flagrant violation of the law of nations, and of the most solemn engagements; and orders were immediately issued at all the ports of Spain and the Indies for making reprisals upon

the English. It was now, and not until now, that British trade really suffered. The whole of that lucrative branch of commerce which had been previously carried on with Spanish America was abruptly stopped; and the king of England having brought about this result by an act of unwarrantable interference, availed himself of the only remedy that remained to him by a formal declaration of war. The regent of France speedily followed his example, having other and more legitimate causes of complaint against Spain; for Alberoni, unable to cope with all the enemies of his country in the field, had recourse to the subtlest arts of intrigue, and had already succeeded in organising a conspiracy, through the ambassador at Paris, for the assassination of the duke of Orleans. The conspiracy was discovered by the vigilance of the administration, whose suspicions were excited in consequence of secret intelligence from England; the Spanish ambassador was arrested, all the persons concerned in the plot were sent to prison, and war was declared against his most catholic majesty.

The king of England met his parliament on the 11th of November with the usual avowals of implicit confidence in their zeal and attachment. He announced the reprisals that had been adopted at the Spanish ports, and was "persuaded that a British parliament would enable him to resent such treatment as became him." Several changes had taken place in the ministry during the recess. Addison, incapable of the labours of his office, had been displaced by Craggs; Stanhope, raised to the peerage, had resumed his old post of secretary of state; and the earl of Sunderland succeeded him at the treasury; lord Berkely was placed at the head of the admiralty; and lord Parker, who had risen from the obscure position of a country attorney to eminence in parliament, and who was afterwards degraded and fined 30,000*l.* for selling places, assumed the seals in the room of the lord chancellor Cowper, who went into retirement. These movements, instead of weakening the power of the government, seemed for the time to inspire it

with increased boldness. A furious debate ensued upon the motion for the address. The ministers accused the court of Spain of violating the treaty of Utrecht; the opposition described the victory of admiral Byng as an act of perfidious aggression. "Instead of being called upon," exclaimed Walpole, "to express our entire satisfaction, we ought to show our entire dissatisfaction with a conduct that was contrary to the law of nations, and a breach of solemn treaties." But the address was carried, nevertheless, by large majorities in both houses. It was idle to contend against the overwhelming influence of the court; and although Shippen, undismayed by punishment, continued to protest against the German policy of the monarch, an ample supply was voted for the necessities of the war.

In the midst of these turbulent scenes, a ray of political grace broke upon the country. The agitation of the conflict to which the whigs were exposed in the commencement of their administration compelled them to adopt a course of policy inimical to their speculative opinions, and irreconcileable with their professions out of office. Their first object was to secure the power which the Hanoverian accession had thrown into their hands. In order to accomplish this end, their measures had hitherto been dictated by a spirit of revenge, and by that sense of danger which leads men to sacrifice every thing to security. But having destroyed, as they believed for ever, the hopes of the Pretender, and feeling comparatively assured of the tranquillity of the kingdom, they now addressed themselves for the first time to the great duty of giving practical effect to their principles. To the imperishable honour of the king, he had the sacred cause of religious toleration at heart; and, while he was pledged to the strict maintenance of the protestant ascendency, he always felt the necessity of abolishing those unjust and invidious distinctions which excluded the dissenters from their proper share in the advantages and protection of the constitution. They had been all along zealous supporters of the pro-

testant succession, and they naturally expected to be freed from the penal acts which oppressed them when that succession was established. In addition to the Sacramental Test Act, they were also burthened by the Occasional and Schism Bills. The effect of these measures was virtually to shut them out from all participation in a government, the theory of which was general representation, and the practice particular exclusion. The king had long contemplated the repeal of these acts, but was prevented from attempting such an innovation by arguments which were more prudent than generous, and which reflected the fears and exigencies of a period of transition. Numerous meetings of the dissenters had in the meanwhile taken place, and the universal result was a demand for the unconditional abrogation of the disqualifying laws. But the time was not ripe for so sudden a revolution in the venerable tyranny of superstitious legislation. The king pressed the affair to the utmost; and lord Sunderland assured him that it was impracticable, and that "to attempt a repeal of the Test would ruin all." It was accordingly agreed that the Test should abide a more favourable season, and that a bill should be introduced by lord Stanhope for the repeal of the Occasional and Schism Acts, and of such clauses in the Test and Corporation Act as operated to the exclusion of protestant dissenters from civil offices.

Bishop Hoadley had prepared the public mind for this enlightened measure. Preaching before the king in the chapel royal, he declared that the kingdom of Christ, and the sanctions by which it was sustained, were wholly spiritual. He asserted that "the church, taking the term in its utmost latitude of signification, did not, and could not, possess the slightest degree of authority under any commission, or pretended commission, derived from Christ; that the church of England, and all other national churches, were merely civil or human institutions, established for the purposes of diffusing and perpetuating the knowledge and belief of Christianity, which contained a system of truths, not in their nature differing

from other truths, excepting by their superior weight and importance, and which were to be inculcated in a manner analogous to other truths, demanding only, from their more interesting import, proportionably higher degrees of care, attention, and assiduity in the promulgation of them." * These declarations threw the high-church party into a flame. They denounced Hoadley as an enemy to all church government, and went so far as to accuse him of a desire to plunge the kingdom of Christ into anarchy and confusion. But the effect of the controversy was miraculous. Like a tempest that disperses the clouds and clears the air, it purified the atmosphere of thought and investigation; and enabled the people to discern the truth which had been so long concealed under the dark vapours of a dense and obstinate bigotry. The right of private judgment was gradually unfolded to the understanding of the multitude; and the inherent spirit of freedom which shattered the priestly despotism of Rome, and vindicated in the Reformation the inalienable liberty of the human conscience, was made manifest to the nation.

Lord Stanhope introduced his bill on the 13th of December. It was emphatically entitled "An act for strengthening the protestant interest in these kingdoms." † It produced, as might have been anticipated, a strong sensation in the house. The bishops were the principal

* This celebrated sermon was not only approved of by his majesty, but published by his command. His majesty's sincerity in the maintenance of liberty of conscience cannot be doubted; and the virulence of the opposition against which he had to contend, may be appreciated from the fact that, notwithstanding the royal sanction which had been given to this sermon, the archbishops, bishops, and clergy were so incensed at its doctrines, that they convened a convocation to try Hoadley as the principal, and the king as *particeps criminis*. But his majesty dismissed the insolent assembly, which was the last of the kind that has been held in this country.

† The earl of Nottingham opposed the bill by a shallow and contemptible quibble. "The church of England," said his lordship, "is certainly the happiest church in the world, since even the greatest contradictions contribute to her support; for nothing can be more contradictory than a bill which is said to be calculated to strengthen the protestant interest, and the church of England, and which, at the same time, repeals two acts that were made for her further security." The real contradiction lay at the other side in attempting to strengthen the protestant interest by bills of pains and penalties. The repeal of enactments hostile to the true spirit of christianity is, on the contrary, the most consistent and effectual way to strengthen a christian church.

speakers, and took different sides, betraying a strange diversity of opinion amongst the heads of the established church respecting its constitution, its privileges, and its safeguards. The exhibition was not calculated to improve the respect of the people for an institution made up of such elements of sophistry and intemperance. The archbishop of Canterbury maintained that the acts proposed to be repealed, were the main bulwarks of the church, although he admitted, at the same time, that the act against schism was a dead letter. Bishop Hoadley replied that these bulwarks were acts of persecution; that if mere self-preservation were admitted as a sufficient excuse for such laws, then the heathen persecutions against christians, and the popish persecutions against protestants, were justifiable; that the safety of the church was best secured by equal justice, and that toleration was not a favour or indulgence, but a natural right. The bishop of Rochester was of opinion, that the measure overturned the foundation of the church; and the bishop of Lincoln suggested, on the other side, that religion was ever used by crafty men as a blind and pretence to carry on political designs. The most formidable obstacle the bill had to encounter was in the opposition of lord Cowper, who on this occasion joined the tories so far as to object to the latter part, which touched upon the repeal of certain clauses in the test and corporation acts: but the bishop of Peterborough demonstrated the weakness of that objection, by showing that the dissenters enjoyed full toleration under king James, while they were incapacitated by the test from serving that government of which they were allowed to be the firmest friends. Lord Lansdowne distinguished himself upon this memorable occasion by a speech which exhibited all the virulence of the defeated faction to which he belonged, and all the self-contradictions which are inseparable from the advocacy of a bad cause. He expressed the utmost astonishment to hear the merits and virtues of dissenters extolled within the walls of parliament. "Who is there among us," he exclaimed, "but can tell of some ancestor either sequestered or

murdered by them? Who voted the lords useless? The dissenters. Who abolished episcopacy? The dissenters. Who destroyed freedom of parliament? The dissenters. Who introduced government by standing armies? The dissenters. Who washed their hands in the blood of their martyred sovereign? The dissenters. Have they repented? No — they glory in their wickedness at this day." To condemn the dissenters because they introduced standing armies was not the only inconsistency committed by lord Lansdowne. He asserted that, while the dissenters were the enemies of the state, the Roman catholics were its best supporters. "A noble duke," he observed, "seems, with some warmth, to have taken offence, that the Roman catholics and dissenters have been mentioned in the debate upon the same level, whereas their religion is high treason. But I never yet understood that their religion was high treason; indeed I have heard that it might be high treason to make converts to it; and by the same reason the reformed religion may be high treason in popish countries. But if we may compare them with the dissenters, upon a foot of merit with respect to the government, the catholics, as far as has been yet made to appear, have infinitely the advantage. To whom do we owe our magna charta? To our ancient barons unreformed. And were there not as many struggles for liberty before the reformation as since? To whom do we owe the revolution but to catholic powers? Even the pope himself united to encourage and support the prince of Orange in his undertaking. To whom do we owe our present security in the protestant establishment, but to the most potent, the most arbitrary, the most famous for persecution of all the popish powers — the most inveterate and implacable enemies of the protestant persuasion — France, Savoy, and the emperor? And have not the ministers, one after another, assured us that these mortal enemies to our souls in another world, are our only guarantees for our salvation in this?"*

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii.

At this distance of time, with all the changes that have taken place in the relations of parties, this species of resistance to the claims of dissenters is hardly intelligible. But it was conformable to the then existing condition of things; and, acting under the influences which in that age coerced the judgment of the ablest men, it was not regarded as an anomaly that the merits of the catholics should be held up as a fair subject of panegyric, while protestant dissenters were rigidly excluded from admission within the civil pale of a protestant government. The tories have since abundantly expiated their error, by directing all their wrath against the catholics, as the most implacable enemies of the constitution: but it has also been reserved for a later period to exhibit the noble example of a perfect toleration that extends equal freedom to both.

The bill was carried in the upper house, with the omission of the clauses respecting the test and corporation act: and in that form it passed the commons. The obligations of the opposition forced some of the members, including Walpole and Shippen, to vote against a measure which, under other circumstances, must have received their hearty concurrence. Walpole admitted that he opposed the bill purely to embarrass the court, and in after years he did not hesitate to express his regret at having joined so inconsiderately in the clamours of the high-church party.

1719. The Irish parliament passed a similar measure in the following July, but could not be prevailed upon to extend it to the repeal of the sacramental test. Nothing further was attempted on the subject during the present reign; and the king declared to lord Barrington that his ministers had assured him there was no hope of carrying the point, and that he was persuaded the dissenters were too much his friends to insist upon a thing which might be infinitely prejudicial to him, without doing them any essential good. The dissenters were too grateful for the wise and liberal policy that had already been extended to them to press their demands farther.

Parliament was prorogued on the 18th of April; but just before the recess, a bill was brought in by government, without any previous notice of such an intention, to restrain the crown from enlarging the peerage by more than six new creations, and to prevent any further introductions into the house, except in cases of extinct titles. His majesty sent a message to the house to declare that he had so much at heart the security and constitution of parliaments in all future ages, as to be willing that his prerogative should not stand in the way of so great and necessary a work. This message excited considerable surprise and speculation; and the measure was suspected to be a mere stroke of resentment against the prince of Wales, whose political importance it was calculated, and no doubt designed, to abridge. The feeling of the nation was against it, and the current of opinion ran so strong, that lord Stanhope, after a brief struggle, thought it prudent to postpone it to a more favourable opportunity.*

* The day this bill was introduced, a list of the peers existing at the time of king James I.'s accession to the crown, and of those who had been subsequently advanced to the peerage, was printed and delivered to the lords. It exhibited the following particulars: —

		Extinct.	*Added.*
At the death of queen Elizabeth, the number of English peers was	59		
King James created	62	17	45
King Charles I.	59	21	38
King Charles II.	64	53	11
King James II.	8	8	0
King William and queen Mary	30	21	9
Queen Anne	30	24	6
King George	20	10	10
	332	154	119
Extinct	154		
Remains	178		

At the time of debating the bill, the state of the peers was as follows: —

The prince of Wales and duke of York	2
Dukes	22
Earls	73
Viscounts	13
Barons	68
	178
Archbishops and bishops	26
Peers of Scotland	16
	220

CHAP. V.

1719—1721.

THE KING PAYS A SECOND VISIT TO HANOVER. — ALBERONI ASSISTS THE PRETENDER IN AN ATTEMPT ON ENGLAND. — FAILURE OF THE ENTERPRISE. — SPAIN SUBMITS TO THE ALLIES. — ENGLISH INTRIGUES TO DETACH SWEDEN FROM RUSSIA. — PROVISIONAL TREATY TO SECURE BREMEN AND VERDUN. — OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — THE PEERAGE BILL RESUMED AND LOST. — THE DEPENDENCY OF THE IRISH PARLIAMENT ON THE APPELLATE JURISDICTION OF THE LORDS ESTABLISHED BY A BILL. — PROPOSALS OF THE SOUTH-SEA COMPANY. — THEIR PRIVILEGES INCREASED. — WALPOLE PREDICTS THE CONSEQUENCES. — THE KING RETURNS TO GERMANY. — WALPOLE AND METHUEN JOIN THE ADMINISTRATION. — DISMISSAL OF LORD STAIR. — TREATY OF ALLIANCE WITH SWEDEN. — A BRITISH FLEET APPEARS IN THE BALTIC. — PROGRESS OF THE SOUTH-SEA SCHEME. — THE STOCK ARTIFICIALLY RAISED TO ONE THOUSAND PER CENT. — UNIVERSAL MANIA FOR BUBBLES. — EXCITEMENT OF THE PUBLIC MIND. — THE KING IS SUMMONED HOME. — WALPOLE BRINGS IN A BILL TO RESTORE THE PUBLIC CREDIT. — SECRET COMMITTEE APPOINTED. — DETECTION OF THE INIQUITOUS FRAUDS OF THE SOUTH-SEA DIRECTORS AND SOME OF HIS MAJESTY'S MINISTERS. — SUNDERLAND IS DISGRACED. — AISLABIE IS EXPELLED. — CRAGGS DIES SUDDENLY. — DEATH OF STANHOPE. — KNIGHT, THE CASHIER OF THE COMPANY, FLIES — IS ARRESTED, AND ULTIMATELY PARDONED. — HEAVY PENALTIES LEVIED ON THE DIRECTORS.

SHORTLY after the prorogation, the king, accompanied by lord Stanhope and other ministers, paid a second visit to his dominions in Hanover, appointing lords justices in his absence, the prince of Wales still labouring under his majesty's displeasure. The humiliation of his royal highness was so overwhelming, that he retired into the country, while the young princesses held levees at St. James's, and received the compli-

ments of the lords justices, and the foreign ministers, upon the occasion of his majesty's birth-day, who had now attained his sixtieth year.*

In the meanwhile, Alberoni was busy in Madrid, concerting the means of taking summary vengeance upon England, for her share in the injuries that had been inflicted upon Spain. Surrounded on all sides by enemies, this indefatigable minister still exhibited the most indomitable resolution; and, failing in other projects, he now determined upon making a desperate attempt to restore the pretender. That unfortunate person had, during the previous autumn, married the princess Sobieski, grand-daughter of the king of Poland, and the confidence inspired amongst his adherents by this circumstance was so great, that the duke of Ormond, for whose apprehension a reward of 5000*l.* was offered by government, undertook the conduct of an expedition on his behalf against England. Preparations were made upon a large scale for this hazardous enterprise. The pretender was received with extraordinary pomp at Madrid, where the honours due only to royalty were ostentatiously lavished upon him. An armament was equipped at Cadiz, consisting of 6000 regular troops, and arms for a much larger number; and the duke of Ormond, with the title of captain-general of the king of Spain, took the command, setting sail for England towards the end of March. But the fate of this expedition only afforded another illustration of the good fortune which was superstitiously attributed to king George. The squadron had scarcely reached Cape Finisterre when it was dispersed by a violent storm. The elements warred on the side of the Hanoverian succession. Two frigates alone escaped. They reached the northern coast of Scotland on the 4th of April, where three or four hundred Spanish soldiers landed, and were speedily joined by reinforcements of Highlanders. Gathered into the mountain pass of Glenshiel, this shattered remnant made an heroic resistance to the

* Tindal.

king's troops, but were at last routed, and the Spaniards surrendered at discretion.

Disasters now came thickly and heavily upon Spain, doomed to sink under external oppression and domestic impolicy. The lord Cobham, making a vigorous descent upon the coast, took possession of Vigo ; — Messina was recovered from the marquis de Lede ; — Palermo was invested on the one side by the British fleet, and on the other by the imperial army, under the command of the count de Merci ; — Port Antonio, in the bay of Biscay, was dismantled by a detachment of French soldiers and English sailors ; — arrangements were in progress for an expedition against Spanish America ; and the duke of Berwick, at the head of a powerful force, had already penetrated the interior, and reduced Fontarabia and St. Sebastian. The last hope of Spain was extinguished. Submission alone remained ; and the king agreed to a convention, by which Sicily was relinquished, and the terms dictated by the allies were fully ratified. Alberoni, like Gortz, paid the penalty of his rash and evil councils. His master, writhing under the accumulated disgraces his fatal intrigues had brought upon the kingdom, dismissed him from his presence, and, by a letter under his own hand, ordered him to leave the country within three days.

The professed object of the journey to the continent this year, was to bring about a peace in the North, between Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, and Russia. In the first three his majesty succeeded, more by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances than by skill or influence ; in the last he failed.

The sudden death of the hair-brained hero of Sweden cut the Gordian knot of these perplexed and intricate policies. Previously to his decease, a congress had taken place in the island of Aland, between the Swedish and Prussian plenipotentiaries, which had nearly brought to a close certain terms which would have been highly dangerous to the interests of Geerge I. The death of Charles XII. interrupted the progress of the negotia-

tion, and a British fleet in the Baltic broke it off. Sweden, deluded into the belief that England would assist her in the recovery of Livonia and the other provinces that had been subjugated by Russia, readily acquiesced in the proposals of lord Cartaret, the minister who had been selected for this perfidious mission by the court of St. James's. This vaccillation on the part of Sweden, vibrating, in her own intrinsic weakness, between the attractive offers of two great sovereigns, and embracing that which promised to rescue her from the encroachments of her ambitious neighbour, was resented on the part of the czar by a fresh invasion. Sending a powerful armament into the gulf of Bothnia, he penetrated Sweden at several points, overruning the country with 40,000 men, and laying waste numerous towns and villages, on his track of desolation. Sweden was now at the mercy of English diplomacy; and, trembling at the ruin which impended over her, was induced without difficulty to sign a provisional treaty in the month of July, by which Bremen and Verdun —the prize for which all this bloodshed and treasure was expended, and the grave of the honour of England —were ceded to Hanover at a cost of a million of rix-dollars; a sum infinitely above the value of the whole revenue of the electorate. By this memorable treaty, negotiated by a Hanoverian minister in the name of the king of England, Sleswic was guaranteed to Denmark, in direct contravention of a former treaty, and in open and shameless violation of the national faith. Having succeeded so far in propitiating Denmark, and disabling Sweden in a masquerade of pacification, the king of England mediated a suspension of arms between the kings of Poland, Prussia, and Denmark. This preposterous farce of Hanoverian aggrandisement was wound up with treaties of peace, recognising the right of the king of Poland to his crown, which was all he got in the scramble, disposing of Stetin and Eastern Pomerania to Prussia, at the price of two millions of rix-dollars, and confirming Sleswic to Denmark, on the

restitution of Western Pomerania and the province of Wismar, — the last reliques of the splendid acquisitions of Gustavus Adolphus. The real object of the intervention of Great Britain was now accomplished, and Sweden was left to shift for herself. After having been tricked into a settlement which defrauded her of one portion of her realm under a solemn pledge of assisting her in the recovery of the remainder, she was literally thrown at the feet of the Russian bear. The czar hung upon her frontiers, sacked her ports, and harassed her by repeated invasions; while the king of England, who had brought her into these difficulties, regarded her misfortunes with a degree of indifference utterly irreconcilable with the lowest notions of justice or vulgar integrity.

But the character of the transactions in which his majesty had been occupied abroad did not interfere, upon his return, with that self-complacency which usually distinguished his declarations from the throne. At the opening of the parliament on the 23d November, the people were congratulated in the royal speech upon the great success that had attended his majesty's negotiations in the recess, "the hand of God being visibly with his majesty in all his undertakings." Instead of shrinking from a reference to the state of Sweden, the ingenious, but audacious, expedient was resorted to, of exulting in the benefits that had been bestowed upon her. "One protestant power," we quote the words of the speech in allusion to Sweden, "has already been *relieved* by our seasonable interposition; and such a foundation is laid by our late treaties for a union amongst other great protestant powers, as will very much tend to the security of our holy religion." A collection of king's speeches, illuminated by running notes, describing simply the actual progress of contemporaneous events, would furnish a strange and suggestive commentary upon the policy of cabinets. This particular speech passed away without discussion. Parliament appeared to be too well pleased with the prospect

of peace to demur at the interest which Heaven was asserted to have taken in the transfer of Bremen and Verdun.

The king plainly indicated, in this document, his determination to persevere with the peerage bill; and no means were left untried by the minister, even to the grossest bribery and corruption, to secure its success. In the recess, a paper war drew out the talents of Addison in favour of the measure, and of Steele and Walpole against it *; and the country was thrown into a ferment upon a question which was at first introduced under the auspices of the court, and which finally degenerated into a nominal excuse for a trial of party strength... The administration affected to regard it as a whig test, and the sanguine and overbearing Sunderland did not scruple to denounce its opponents as being secretly favourable to the return of the tories to office. His menaces and bribes were not wholly inoperative. The whigs in opposition wavered and became irresolute. Walpole alone was firm and uncompromising. He reprobated the measure in the most vehement terms, and produced such an effect upon the minds of his friends at a meeting at Devonshire house, that after vainly attempting to dissuade him from his purpose, they at last came over to his opinions, and agreed to make an united stand against the bill in the lower house.† The conse-

* Steele published a pamphlet called the Plebeian, in which he endeavoured to show that the tendency of the peerage bill was to introduce an aristocracy, which, so limited, would be despotic and irresistible. Addison replied under the title of an old whig, which drew a rejoinder from the Plebeian. Addison answered him a second time, and mixed a little personality with the controversy, by an allusion to "little Dicky, whose trade it was to write pamphlets." Steele, more delicate in the conduct of the argument, satisfied his resentment by a quotation from Cato. Here the contest ended. Addison died before the fate of the measure was accomplished.

† Walpole's speech on this question was a masterpiece of eloquence and cogent argument. Speaker Onslow describes it as being full of natural eloquence and genius. "His topics," he observes, "were popular, and made for those he hoped to bring over. He talked of the honours of the peerage as the constitutional reward of great qualities and actions only in the service of the commonwealth, and to be kept open for that purpose: that the usual path to the temple of honour has been through the temple of virtue; but by this bill it was now to be only through the sepulchre of a dead ancestor, without merit or fame." This is not very accurate criticism, but it shows what was thought of the speech at the time. The figure of the temple of honour was not so loosely employed as it is in Onslow's description; on the contrary, it appears to have been carefully premeditated, and indeed the whole oration bears evident marks of study. Wal-

quence was, that although it passed the lords, it was thrown out of the commons by an overwhelming majority.

1720. The next subject of importance that occupied the attention of parliament, was a bill, which, without any mystification as to its object, was frankly entitled a bill for securing the dependency of Ireland upon the crown of Great Britain. During some centuries before, it might have been supposed that the dependency of Ireland was made clear enough by the oppression which had uniformly distinguished the English government of that country: but this bill was framed for the purpose of confirming that dependency in a distinct declaratory enactment. The mere deprivation of their original rights in the soil, was not considered a sufficient reduction of the independence of the Irish; and it was now determined that the shadow of a national legislature which they enjoyed, overawed even as it was by an English viceroy, English influence, and English arms, should be subjugated to the control of the English parliament. The immediate circumstance out of which the measure took its rise, was trivial in the inverse ratio of the results to which it led; but the slightest pretext will answer the purpose when an act of tyranny is about to be accomplished by the strong hand. One Maurice Annesley had been dispossessed of certain lands in the county of Kildare by a decree of the house of peers in Ireland, and, contrary to the usual practice, he made an appeal to the house of peers in England, which had never before been resorted to as a court of appellate

pole spoke with an elaboration of diction, emulated in later times only by Burke, choosing the figure referred to by Onslow for the opening of the exordium. The passage is thus reported in the Parliamentary History. "Among the Romans, the wisest people upon earth, the temple of fame was placed behind the temple of virtue, to denote that there was no coming to the temple of fame, but through that of virtue. But if this bill is passed into a law, one of the most powerful incentives to virtue would be taken away, since there would be no arriving at honour, but through the winding-sheet of some old decrepit lord, or the grave of an extinct noble family; a policy very different from that glorious and enlightened nation, who made it their pride to hold out to the world illustrious examples of merited elevation,

Patere honoris scirent ut cuncti viam."

jurisdiction from the Irish parliament. The British house of peers reversed the decree, and ordered the barons of the exchequer in Ireland to put Annesley forthwith in possession of his lands. The barons proceeded immediately to obey the order, and issued out an injunction to the sheriff of Kildare, setting several fines upon him for refusing to put it in execution. The Irish house of lords interfered, discharged the sheriff of the fines, and, resolving that the barons had acted in manifest derogation to the king's prerogative, in his high court of parliament in Ireland, as also of the rights and privileges of that kingdom, ordered them into the custody of the black rod. This spirited proceeding was followed by a representation to the king, in which the house of peers set forth their right to the final adjudication of causes in Ireland. The English house of peers met this remonstrance with a resolution that the barons of the exchequer in Ireland had acted with courage, according to law, in support of his majesty's prerogative, and with fidelity to the crown of Great Britain; and they further addressed his majesty, that he might graciously confer some marks of his favour upon them. The subject being thus mooted between the two parliaments, was speedily set at rest by the declaratory bill, which confirmed to the English house of peers the supremacy of the appellant jurisdiction, and established the right of the English parliament to make laws for the kingdom of Ireland in all cases whatever. The Irish parliament submitted tamely to this monstrous despotism, which made the constitution that had been guaranteed to them by England a dead letter. At a later period, they made a gallant and successful stand for their rights — but only to vote them away again after they had secured them. It is difficult to decide which spectacle is more humiliating to freemen — the weakness with which Ireland surrendered her liberties, or the profligacy with which England took advantage of it.

The South-Sea company, which owed its origin to a

chimerical project, formed by Harley, for the purpose of restoring public credit, submitted at this period proposals to parliament for reducing the national debt. The Bank also submitted proposals; but the former were accepted. The grand object of government was the reduction of the irredeemable annuities, which amounted to nearly 800,000*l.*, and, instead of adopting a sinking fund, as recommended by Walpole, they injudiciously embraced the magnificent but visionary schemes laid before them by this great bubble association. The South-Sea company was an extraordinary delusion from the commencement. It was to bring an inexhaustible stream of wealth to England from the mines of Potosi and Mexico; the right to trade in the South Seas being all the time in the close monopoly of the king of Spain. The only privilege the company was ever able to obtain, was that of supplying the Spanish colonies of America with negroes for thirty years, and of sending a single ship annually to Spanish America, limited in cargo and tonnage, one fourth of the profits of which were reserved for the king of Spain, together with 5 per cent. upon the remainder. Splendid expectations were raised by interested persons, who did not hesitate to publish an enumeration of the various ports where the company had permission to trade and establish factories. Notwithstanding, however, the extensive preparations that were made, and the enormous amount of capital subscribed, the first voyage was not made until 1717, and the whole trade was broken up in the following year by the rupture with Spain, when the company's factories were destroyed, and their effects seized and estreated.*

But these disastrous circumstances appeared to have no effect upon the minister in dissuading him from an alliance with a company based upon so palpable a fallacy, and labouring against such insuperable obstacles. The infatuation which had already allured thousands of people, exercised a similar influence over the judgment

* Coxe's Walpole.

of the cabinet. The proposals of the company were accepted, and it was further considered necessary to give them increased and extensive privileges with a view to prevent competition, and secure the attainment of the advantages held forth by the specious project. For this purpose a bill was brought in by the chancellor of the exchequer, to which Walpole offered a strenuous resistance, but which was finally carried after a long and anxious discussion. By this bill the South-Sea company were invested with certain exclusive commercial rights, and authorised to take in (either by purchase or subscription) the whole of the national debts, redeemable and irredeemable, amounting to about thirty-three millions; the public securities being thus simplified and contracted into one aggregate. A clause was proposed, in the committee on the bill, to fix and determine the share or shares to which the proprietors of the annuities who should voluntarily subscribe to the stock of the company, should be entitled in its increased capital; but this salutary and protective clause was rejected on the ground that it might endanger the success of the undertaking to oblige the company to fix a price upon the annuities; that, as it was the interest of the company to encourage voluntary subscription, it might be safely anticipated they would offer advantageous conditions to the annuitants; and that, if the conditions they made were unreasonable, it would afterwards be in the power of the commons to issue any directions in the matter they thought proper. Walpole exerted himself with extraordinary zeal and ability to defeat this ruinous measure. He showed that it would divert the industry of the country from its legitimate channels, by encouraging the pernicious practice of stock-jobbing, which had produced such misery and confusion in France; that it held out a dangerous lure to the unwary, to part with the profits of their labour for imaginary wealth; that, as the whole success of the scheme must depend on the rise of the stock, the principle on which it was founded was an evil of the first

magnitude, since it would artificially raise the value of the stock by promising dividends which never could be realised; and that, therefore, if the proposals were accepted, the rise of the stock ought to be limited; and that, whether the project succeeded or failed, it would be equally disastrous, making the directors masters of the government if they succeeded, and spreading incalculable destruction over the country if they failed. But his warning voice was unavailing. He was compared to Cassandra, predicting incredible evils. The bill passed with an astounding majority of 172 against 55. The moment the intelligence was received in Exchange-alley, the stock of the company, which had gradually risen to 130, since the commons accepted their proposals, suddenly advanced to nearly 400. It afterwards fluctuated and fell to 330, which it maintained, with little variation, for two or three weeks.* We shall presently see that the subsequent history of this remarkable fraud on the credulity of the legislature, more than fulfilled the gloomy prophecies of Walpole.

The session of parliament was now drawing to a close, and the king again announced his intention of visiting Germany, appointing the same lords justices as before, with the addition of Townshend, who, once more taken into favour, was nominated lord president of the council. A show of reconciliation was brought about between the king and the prince of Wales, by the intercession of Walpole, who was induced, at the earnest solicitation of his majesty, to accept the office of paymaster of the forces, while Methuen was appointed comptroller of the household. Other changes also took place, and several honours were conferred on particular individuals. The lord Stair, ambassador at Versailles, was suddenly dismissed, for daring to intercede with the administration for the pardon of the earl of Mar, who was now ready to leave the service of the pretender, and embrace that of the king. But lord Sunderland was unfortunately destitute of the capacity of propiti-

* Political State.

ating enemies or securing adherents. Lord Stair, whose blunt honesty seems to have stood in the way of his preferment, did not hesitate to ascribe this impracticable spirit to the whole administration. "Lord Mar," he observed, in a letter to Mr. Craggs, "is *outré* at the usage he has met with. He says our ministry may be great and able men, but that they are not skilful in making proselytes, or keeping friends when they have them. I am pretty much of his mind." And, again, in a subsequent communication, he adds, "After the usage I meet with, I do not wonder to see that our ministers have so few friends. As to my revocation, if it was possible I should have a mind to stay in this country, you have made it impracticable. You have taken all effectual ways to destroy any personal credit I had with the regent — you have made it plain to him that I have no credit with the king. You are under a necessity, therefore, of sending another minister to this court. As to the manner of my revocation, I do not care to make the grimace of desiring it for false reasons — I expect nothing, and I fear nothing. As to my behaviour when I come home, I shall ever be a faithful servant to the king, and act as a man in whom the love of his country is superior to all other considerations." * Lord Stair had but too much reason to complain. He had served with fidelity and approved talent at the court of France for six years, and was the confidential negotiator of the important treaties that had been effected during that period, between France and England. No man living was so intimately acquainted with the policy and working of the regency. But his merits and his services were the strongest arguments against him, for it was one of the misfortunes of this reign that almost every individual who had rendered valuable aid to the government was certain, at one period or another, to be visited with disgrace.

His majesty upon his arrival in Germany had the satisfaction to find that, through the subtle management

* Hardwicke State Papers.

of lord Cartaret, the provisional treaty of the previous July had in the following January been resolved into a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, with Sweden, whereby his Britannic majesty bound himself not only to furnish succours to that country, but to engage his friends and allies to contribute by supplies and auxiliaries, "ad coërcendum Czarum Russiæ." The Russian minister in London protested against this proceeding, not only as a direct breach of engagements previously entered into with the czar, but as a flagrant act of ingratitude, affirming that the duchies of Bremen and Verdun — the source of all these contentions — were procured from Denmark at the solicitation of the czar. The position in which England was placed by this conflict of interests was seriously calculated to diminish her influence amongst the European powers. Whatever course she took must, of necessity, involve a breach of faith, since she had committed herself to contradictory pledges on all sides; but as the policy she now adopted was at least fortified by reason and justice, it was supported by the hearty concurrence of public opinion at home. In pursuance of the undertaking specified in the above treaty, a fleet, under the command of Sir John Norris, formed a junction with the Swedish squadron in the Baltic, in the month of April; and the Russians, aware of the imperative instructions of the English admirals, retired into their ports, where it was not judged expedient to follow them. And by this demonstration the aggressions of the czar were temporarily suspended.

The movements of the king of England in his favourite pleasure-ground in Hanover do not properly enter into the annals of England. The possession of that principality, although it was the foremost object of his majesty's care during the recess of parliament, as, indeed, it was the principal subject of his thoughts at all times, was of little interest to the English people, beyond the sympathy which a powerful protestant country might naturally feel in the affairs of a small

dependent protestant community. In all other points of view Hanover was regarded with jealousy and discontent, for it could not be concealed that in the labours for the maintenance and extension of that petty electorate, the honour, the blood, and the treasures of a great kingdom had been most wantonly squandered. The king's German predilections grew into a bye-word of contempt, expressive of the antipathy of his English subjects, amongst whom there were many who would have willingly fomented any continental divisions that might have jeopardised the security of Hanover, had they not been restrained by obvious prudential considerations.*

The state of affairs in England during this interval has no parallel in the records of nations. The South-Sea scheme had worked out its inevitable results, and the mystery of that stupendous fraud was laid bare. The directors of the company, finding that their stock had undergone considerable fluctuations, resorted to the most profligate arts to enable them the more effectually to impose on the public. A rumour was spread that earl Stanhope had received overtures to effect an exchange with the court of Madrid, of Gibraltar and Minorca for some places in Peru, where the company might enlarge their transactions to an almost unlimited extent. The exchange was immediately crowded with buyers. The directors opened their books for a subscription of a million, at the rate of 300*l.* for every

* The *Craftsman*, a periodical paper published a few years later, alludes to this disposition and reprobates it. "I am much at a loss," says the sturdy Caleb D'Anvers, of Gray's Inn, replying to some writer who had touched upon this subject; "to see how it can be the duty of any Englishman to encourage foreign powers to invade the king's German dominions, and to excite the neighbouring princes to oppress a people merely because they acknowledge the same sovereign that we do. I scorn, as much as he, to represent that country barren and despicable; though I cannot help thinking the British dominions much more considerable, both to his majesty and us, and deserving the first place in our thoughts. The former hath certainly the common claim of all protestant nations to our favour and good wishes; but how far we are obliged, under the name of protection, to engage ourselves in a war upon that account, I must leave to the decision of the Act of Settlement, and to that way of thinking upon it (as our author expresses himself) in which the parliament shall declare themselves *to* be."

100*l.* share. Such was the avidity with which this dazzling proposal was received that the first subscription amounted to upwards of two millions of original stock. The stock, of course, rapidly advanced, and was sold in a few days for double the price of the first payment. The success that attended this experiment encouraged the directors to repeat it, and they opened a second subscription at the advanced rate of 400*l.* for every 100*l.* share. In a few hours no less than a million and a half was subscribed at this rate, and many infatuated people deposited their annuities in the hands of the company without even asking what price they would allow for them. By the 29th of May, it was calculated that nearly two thirds of the annuitants had subscribed, and the directors found means to raise their stock to 500*l.* per cent. The multitudes of buyers who now pressed forward increased so tumultuously, and the universal rage for speculation spread through all ranks with such unprecedented fury, that in a few days it rose to 550, and on the 2d of June reached the prodigious amount of 890 per cent. At this moment, when it seemed impossible to make any further advance, all those who had purchased stock merely with the intention of trading in it for present profit appeared in the market as sellers, and were so much more numerous than the buyers that the stock rapidly fell, and was kept, with great difficulty, at 750 to the closing of the books on the 22d of June. The directors now adopted the expedient of lending out money or notes to the proprietors of stock at the rate of 4*l.* per cent., and issued a public notice that the bonds which fell due on the 25th of June would be paid in money by their cashier. But this was only a trick to make money plenty in the market, and to inspire the public with renewed confidence in the stability of the company. The consequence was that immediately afterwards they opened a third subscription at the rate of 1000*l.* for every 100*l.* share, by which they raised four millions of stock, amounting at the price offered to forty millions

sterling. So completely were the people deceived by these operations that before the end of June these last subscriptions sold at above 2000*l.* per cent. advance; and the original stock rose to upwards of 1000*l.* per cent. The bubble was now at its height; and after a variety of struggles and shifts it burst upon the country in a flood of indescribable ruin.

Nor was the ruin confined to the misery directly produced by the transactions of this atrocious conspiracy. A spirit of speculation was generated in the country which led to consequences so extensive as to involve every class in the community. Projects of the most absurd kind were set on foot and greedily embraced; above a million and a half was lost by these nefarious practices; and at last a proclamation was issued, declaring that all such projects should be deemed common nuisances, and prosecuted as such; and that any broker who should buy or sell shares in them should be liable to a penalty of 500*l.* The proclamation, however, was evaded in a variety of ways, and the lords justices, in order to put a stop to such illegal proceedings, ordered all petitions that had been presented for patents and charters for joint stock companies to be dismissed.*

* There were about a hundred projects at this time actually afloat; and they were vulgarly denominated, as they ultimately turned out to be, bubbles, or mere cheats. (See "Political State.") The titles of a few of these bubbles will be sufficient to show the folly of the popular credulity to which they were addressed, viz.

For building and rebuilding houses throughout England, 3,000,000*l.*
For encouraging the breed of horses.
For erecting salt-pans in Holy Island, 2,000,000*l.*
For furnishing funerals to any part of Great Britain.
For a grand dispensary, 3,000,000*l.*
For a wheel for perpetual motion, 1,000,000*l.*
For insuring to all masters and mistresses the losses they shall sustain by servants, 3,000,000*l.*
For insuring from thefts and robberies.
For extracting silver from lead.
For the transmutation of quicksilver into a malleable fine metal.

Many of these bubbles related to the manufactures and imports and exports of the kingdom, to granting loans of money on security, &c., and had a tolerably feasible aspect; but others were so ridiculous, that it is utterly impossible to comprehend the infatuation of the unfortunate persons who were swindled by them. One specimen of this class may be specially detailed. It was a proposal "for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, *but nobody to know what it is.*" For this promising object a scheme for half a million was laid down, by which every subscriber, paying

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The difficulties that gradually accumulated round the affairs of the South-Sea Company, led at length as

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two guineas for subscribing, was to have 100*l.* per annum for every 100*l.* so subscribed. How this was to be done did not appear in the proposals, but it was stated that the particulars would be revealed in a month, when the money subscribed was to be paid in. Extravagant as this scheme was, the projector received 1000 subscriptions, amounting to 2000 guineas, in a forenoon, and decamped with his booty in the evening. (See Parl. Hist.) The evils produced by these gambling frauds, in which, unfortunately, many of the nobility, gentry, and officers in both services were involved, became a subject for a thousand lampoons, and the following ballad, which, to the great annoyance of the ministers, was publicly sold and cried about in the Exchange Alley, forms a remarkable pendant to this strange historical episode.

A South-Sea Ballad; or Merry Remarks upon Exchange Alley Bubbles. To a new tune, called "The Grand Elixir; or, The Philosopher's Stone discovered."

1.

In London stands a famous pile,
And near that pile an alley,
Where merry crowds for riches toil,
And wisdom stoops to folly.
Here sad and joyful, high and low,
Court fortune for her graces,
And as she smiles, or frowns, they show
Their gestures and grimaces.

2.

Here stars and garters do appear,
Among our lords the rabble:
To buy and sell, to see and hear
The Jews and Gentiles squabble.
Here crafty courtiers are too wise
For those who trust to fortune;
They see the cheat with clearer eyes,
Who peep behind the curtain.

3.

Our greatest Indies hither come,
And ply in chariots daily;
Oft pawn their jewels for a sum,
To venture in the Alley.
Young harlots, too, from Drury Lane,
Approach the 'Change in coaches,
To fool away the gold they gain
By their obscene debauches.

4.

Long-heads may thrive by sober rules,
Because they think, and drink not;
But headlongs are our thriving fools,
Who only drink, and think not.
The lucky rogues, like spaniel dogs,
Leap into South-Sea water,
And there they fish for golden frogs,
Not caring what comes n'ter.

5.

'Tis said that alchymists of old
Could turn a brazen kettle
Or leaden cistern into gold,
That noble, tempting metal.

a *dernier ressort* to a variety of expedients for redeeming their credit, and amongst the rest to certain propositions which were submitted to the bank, and in which the lords of the treasury took an immediate part for the sake of

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But if it here may be allowed
To bring in great and small things,
Our cunning South Sea, like a god,
Turns nothing into all things.

6.

What need have we of Indian wealth,
Or commerce with our neighbours?
Our constitution is in health,
And riches crown our labours.
Our South-Sea ships have golden shrouds,
They bring us wealth, 'tis granted;
But lodge their treasure in the clouds,
To hide it till it 's wanted.

7.

Oh Britain, bless thy present state,
Thou only happy nation —
So oddly rich, so madly great,
Since bubbles came in fashion!
Successful rakes exert their pride,
And count their airy millions;
While homely drabs in coaches ride,
Brought up to town on pillions.

8.

Few men who follow reason's rules
Grow fat with South-Sea diet;
Young rattles and unthinking fools
Are those who flourish by it.
Old musty jades, and pushing blades,
Who 've least consideration,
Grow rich apace; whilst wiser heads
Are struck with admiration.

9.

A race of men, who t' other day
Lay crush'd beneath disasters,
Are now by stock brought into play,
And made our lords and masters.
But should our South-Sea bubble fall,
What numbers would be frowning?
The losers then must ease their gall,
By hanging or by drowning.

10.

Five hundred millions, notes and bonds,
Our stocks are worth in value;
But neither lies in goods or lands
Our money, let me tell you.
Yet though our foreign trade is lost,
Of mighty wealth we vapour;
When all the riches that we boast
Consist in scraps of paper.

endeavouring to preserve the public credit. But, after attempting to bring matters to an accommodation, the Bank finally relinquished the contract, and left the company to the fate that no human agency could now avert. "Thus," remarks the sober recorder of these disastrous events, "in the space of eight months were seen the rise, progress, and fall of that mighty fabric, which, being wound up by mysterious springs to a wonderful height, had fixed the eyes and expectations of all Europe, but whose foundations being fraud, illusion, credulity, and infatuation, fell to the ground, as soon as the artful management of the projectors was discovered. The ebb of this swoln fluctuating credit returned with greater violence than it flowed, and carried every thing before it with that precipitation, that the application of the ministers of state, and the directors of the great companies jointly and separately to stop it, were ineffectual."*

A series of expresses were despatched to the king to inform him of the state of affairs, and, filled with consternation, in which the boldest of his advisers participated, he hastened back to England on the 11th of November. Upon his arrival, the stock of the South-Sea Company had already fallen to 200; and upon the prorogation of parliament to the 8th of December — a measure which in such an extraordinary emergency was extremely hazardous — it sunk to 135. A report, however, was circulated that the ministry had entered into an arrangement with the company, together with the Bank and the East India Company, which would greatly conduce to the restoration of public confidence, and the stock was again brought up to 210.

1721. In the debate on the address, an attempt was made by Shippen to fasten the criminality of the public misfortunes upon the ministers; but the country at large was too much agitated by recent events to take any interest in a party contest. The great object was to

* Parl. Hist. vol. vii.

restore the public credit, and to Walpole all eyes were turned for the salvation of the kingdom. He had at first considerable difficulty in obtaining the consent of the commons to the acknowledgment of the validity of the subscriptions which were made by the proprietors of the debt; but having gained that essential point he proceeded to unfold his plan, which was to engraft nine millions of stock into the Bank of England, and a like sum into the East India Company, leaving the remaining twenty millions in the hands of the South-Sea Company. In the management of this scheme, he carefully avoided all speculative or irritating topics, and conducted the discussion throughout with such admirable temper and discretion that he finally, after having encountered the most vexatious opposition even from the three companies, who were not satisfied with the arrangement because none of them derived any peculiar advantage from it, he succeeded in carrying a bill to that effect through the commons, which afterwards passed the lords, and received the royal assent.

But the iniquities of the bubble were yet to be inquired into, and a secret committee of the commons was appointed to investigate the proceedings of the South-Sea directors. The frenzy that had so recently prevailed for all kinds of speculation now gave way to frantic resentment against those who had promoted it. The directors and officers of the South-Sea Company were cited before the lords, and examined at their bar; and the result of the exertions of the secret committee in the lower house developed a history of guilt that produced a sensation of horror in the assembly. The commons ordered their doors to be locked, and the keys placed on the table, and then summoned four members of their house, directors of the company, to attend in their places; upon which, general Ross, on the part of the committee, acquainted the house that "they had already discovered a train of the deepest villany and fraud that hell ever contrived to ruin a nation, which, in due time, they would lay before the house; and that

in the mean while, in order to a farther discovery, they thought it highly necessary to secure the persons of some of the directors and principal South-Sea officers, and seize their papers, which was ordered accordingly."

By the revelations which flowed from these proceedings, it appeared that large transfers of the company's stock had been made to persons holding high trusts in the state, for the purpose of obtaining their support to the South-Sea Bill; and that the company had been guilty of a variety of shameless frauds upon the public, to which they were encouraged not only by the connivance, but by the participation of several of the ministers. The lord Sunderland and Mr. Aislabie, chancellor of the exchequer, who were deeply implicated in these affairs, were forced into a disgraceful resignation of their offices, and the latter was expelled from the house of commons, and committed to the Tower.* Craggs was preserved from ignominy by a sudden death†, and a variety of persons—the majority of them being men of eminence and station—were severely punished by parliament.‡ The utmost rigor was observed throughout this harassing and painful investigation; and if the commons originally betrayed a culpable subserviency in consenting to a plan which they had not sufficiently considered, they abundantly redeemed their character by the intrepidity and stern impartiality with which they now sifted the wrong, and pronounced judgment upon the culprits.

The excitement caused throughout the country by the proceedings was unparalleled. Petitions poured in

* It appeared that Mr. Aislabie had burned a book of accounts, and given a false discharge for 842,000*l.*, besides having speculated, in direct violation of his oath, in the funds of the company.

† It was suspected that Craggs terminated his own life. Mr. Brodrick, a member of the house, who assisted at all these proceedings, says, in a letter to lord Middleton, "one who came out of the city told me, he believed Mr. Craggs dying, if not actually dead, and gave some circumstances in confirmation of a whisper of his having taken a dose; if so, it resembles, in great measure, lord Essex's case."

‡ Amongst these were several members of parliament. To such a height was the indignation of the legislature carried, that one gentleman, Mr. Vernon, was expelled the house of commons for endeavouring to interest general Ross on behalf of his relative, Mr. Aislabie.

from all parts, praying for justice on the offenders.* This strong feeling was communicated even to the lords, and the speeches at both sides partook of a highly inflammable character. Mr. Waller, the son-in-law of Aislabie, having prevaricated in his testimony, and sir John Blount, who was supposed to be the original projector of the bubble, and who was one of its basest agents, refusing to answer certain interrogatories put to him, the duke of Wharton observed, in reference to lord Stanhope, who had somewhat injudiciously interposed to shield the witnesses, "The government of the best princes was sometimes rendered intolerable to their subjects by bad ministers; thus Sejanus had made the reign of Tiberius, a prince originally of the greatest hopes, hateful to the Romans. That wicked minister first began by weaning the affections of the emperor from his son, and next from his people, and so Rome was ruined." Stung by this harsh insinuation, and conscious of his innocence, Stanhope impetuously replied that "the Roman history, no doubt, afforded striking examples; and in return for that which had just been mentioned of a bad minister, he must remind the house of the instance of a great man and illustrious patriot, the elder Brutus, who had a son so profligate, that, to gratify his vices and passions, he hesitated not to sacrifice the liberties of his country." This effort of recrimination was too much for the strength of an honest man, unjustly assailed in a season of national calamity and universal suspicion. Stanhope was seized with sudden illness in the act of speaking, was obliged

* All possible means were employed to exasperate the people against the South-Sea directors and their abettors. Pamphlets and handbills were hourly published and sold in the streets. The most clamorous cries for justice were kept up in a series of letters published in the "London Journal," and supposed to be written by Mr. Gordon. Libels of a seditious character became so frequent, that a committee was appointed to inquire into the authors and printers of them. They sent for Peele, the publisher of the "London Journal," and for Mr. Gordon, but they both kept out of the way. Mist, the publisher of the notorious periodical called "Mist's Journal," was sentenced to stand in the pillory, to pay a fine of fifty pounds, and, after three months' imprisonment, to find security for his good behaviour for seven years. In the meanwhile, his paper was carried on under the evasive title of "Fog's Journal." See "Political State."

to leave the house, and expired on the following evening. The king is said to have received the intelligence of his death at supper, and to have been so overcome with emotion as to burst into tears. He had some abler ministers, but none whose integrity stood so clear and unsullied.

Knight, the cashier of the company, fled to the continent upon the first indication of danger, after having undergone a single examination at the bar of the house of lords. The moment it was known that he had left his house, a reward of 2000*l.* was offered for his apprehension in the name of the king, and an order was issued to stop the ports, and take effectual care of the coasts to prevent Knight, or any other officers of the South-Sea Company, from leaving the kingdom. But it was too late, for he was already beyond the jurisdiction of the English authority. His case was every way remarkable, both in its progress and its sequel. He left his house on a Saturday night, wrote a letter to the directors on the Sunday evening, vindicating the step he had taken, and on the Monday morning went on board a packet, that conveyed him to Calais that evening. In his letter he stated that "self-preservation obliged him to withdraw from the resentment against the directors and himself;" that he had "done nothing to reproach himself with;" that he had "taken with him but little more than a sufficiency to maintain himself;" and that he had "withdrawn only to avoid the weight of an inquiry which he found too heavy, sensible that it would have been impossible to have avoided the appearance and charge of prevarication and perjury from the extent of the inquiry, and the nature and largeness of the transactions." The immediate effect of his disappearance was to bring the investigations of the committee to a sudden termination. It appeared that he had taken with him a certain green book, which was supposed to contain the entire secrets of the company, and without his assistance it was impossible to explore the dark labyrinths of the confused and falsified

accounts.* The utmost pains, therefore, were taken to discover his retreat; and at length, through the vigilance of the English resident at Brussels, he was arrested at Tirlemont; but the governor of the Low Countries, maintaining the peculiar privileges of the States of Brabant, refused to deliver him up, it being an especial provision in the Joyeuse Entrée, that no person accused of any criminal offence should be removed for trial out of the province. Several fruitless applications were made upon the subject, to the emperor and the Brabant authorities, and the matter was treated with such intemperance in the house of commons, that it was proposed to put to an end all commerce in the Netherlands, a furious resolution which was wisely softened down into a motion for a committee to take the state of the commercial relations between England and the Netherlands into consideration. In the interim, Knight effected his escape from the citadel of Antwerp; and his presence in England becoming actually indispensable to the promotion of the ends of justice, he was finally absolved from responsibility by the extension of a free and unconditional pardon. It was suspected that his evidence would have been fatal to Sunderland, to whose influence the suppression of his testimony was attributed, and who, although he was formally acquitted of the charges brought against him, was believed by the whole nation to be guilty.

Driven to the last extremity, the guilty perpetrators

* The embarrassments and difficulties encountered by the committee in their inquiries sufficiently attest the darkness in which the affairs of the company were involved. In the various books they examined they found false and fictitious entries, erasures, alterations, and blanks. Some books were destroyed, and others secreted, and in many of those that remained leaves were torn out. One of the frauds of the company consisted in the formation of a fictitious stock of 574,000*l.* before the bill was passed. This stock was noted as sold, although no money was deposited, by which contrivance no loss could be sustained if the stock fell, and if it rose it was all clear profit. This stock was distributed between the queen's ministers, the earl of Sunderland, Mr. Craggs, Mr. Stanhope, and the Sword-Blade Company. The duchess of Kendal, the countess of Platen, and her two nieces, were severally to receive 10,000*l.* But the wages of the profligate ministers did not end with such small rewards. In another account, Aislabie had 794,451*l.*, and 70,000*l.* in a third; while Sunderland was inserted in the third subscription for 160,000*l.*, and Craggs for 659,000*l.*

of the calamity that had fallen upon the country, and filled the walls of the legislature with cries of distress*, petitioned the house of commons for compassion. But their prayer was silently rebuked; and a valuation was made of the estates of the directors and other officers of the company, upon which a small allowance was granted to each, regulated by the comparative measure of their individual delinquency, and the rest of their property seized for the benefit of the annuitants. Thus ended the most marvellous deception that ever was attempted in an intelligent mercantile community. It has been observed, that the most astonishing circumstance in this prodigious and complicated scene of knavery and credulity is, that, at the very moment when the national delirium was at its height, France had scarcely recovered from the effect of a similar delusion, in the establishment and consequent failure of the Mississippi Company, projected by the famous Law. Examples are too often lost upon nations, although individuals are sometimes found to profit by the admonitions of experience.

* A tumultous concourse of annuitants of both sexes assembled in the lobby of the house of commons and the neighbouring places, during the discussion on the bill for restoring the public credit, and demanded redress of the several members as they went into the house, putting into their hands a paper on which was written, "Pray do justice to the annuitants who lent their money on parliamentary security." The crowd grew so riotous, especially to Mr. Comptroller, to whom they offered some personal violence, that the house, in its own defence, ordered the justices and constables of Westminster into attendance.

CHAP. VI.

1721—1727.

INTOLERANCE OF THE CHURCH PARTY. — BLASPHEMY BILL THROWN OUT BY THE WHIGS. — QUAKER'S AFFIRMATION BILL. — EFFORTS TO RESTORE THE PUBLIC CREDIT. — WALPOLE INTRODUCES A NEW COMMERCIAL CODE. — SUBSIDIES GRANTED TO SWEDEN. — RESTORATION OF PEACE IN THE NORTH OF EUROPE. — DEFENSIVE ALLIANCE ENTERED INTO WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN. — DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT. — DEATHS OF SUNDERLAND AND MARLBOROUGH. — THE ELECTIONS TERMINATE IN FAVOUR OF THE COURT PARTY. — CONSPIRACY TO RESTORE THE PRETENDER DISCOVERED. — UNIVERSAL ALARMS. — ATTERBURY AND OTHERS ARRESTED. — MEETING OF PARLIAMENT. — AUGMENTATION OF THE MILITARY. — SENTENCES UPON THE CONSPIRATORS. — BANISHMENT OF ATTERBURY. — BOLINGBROKE RETURNS TO ENGLAND. — A LEVY IS MADE ON THE ESTATES OF THE ROMAN CATHOLICS. — WALPOLE'S SON IS RAISED TO THE PEERAGE. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION. — THE KING GOES TO HANOVER. — ENTANGLED POLICIES OF EUROPE. — BREMEN AND VERDUN IN DANGER. — SHORT SESSION OF PARLIAMENT. — INTRIGUES IN THE MINISTRY. — WOOD'S COPPER COINAGE PRODUCES DISCONTENTS IN IRELAND. — CARTARET APPOINTED LORD LIEUTENANT. — DISMISSAL OF PULTENEY. — IMPEACHMENT OF LORD MACCLESFIELD. — AFFAIRS OF RUSSIA, SPAIN, AND FRANCE. — TREATY OF VIENNA. — TREATY OF HANOVER. — PREPARATIONS FOR AN EUROPEAN WAR. — FALL OF RIPPERDA. — BREACH WITH RUSSIA. — PRUDENT POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT. — NEGOCIATIONS FOR A GENERAL PEACE. — DEATH OF GEORGE I.

WALPOLE and Townshend were now at the head of the government, and their principles of civil and religious toleration were early tested by the rabid zeal of the high church party.

Some rumours having got abroad of the licentiousness of a certain club, of which the notorious duke of Wharton was a leading member *, the king was advised to issue a proclamation against blasphemous and scan-

* The Hell-fire club.

dalous societies. This occurred at a moment when a violent controversy was going forward, concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and the occasion was seized by the dean of Windsor, to bring in a bill for the suppression of blasphemy and profaneness, by the provisions of which the bishops were authorised to summon any person in holy orders before them, and require him to subscribe the thirty-nine articles, his refusal to render him incapable of holding any ecclesiastical benefice. The same course was prescribed for dissenting ministers and teachers, who, if they refused, were to be deprived of the benefits of the act of toleration. This measure was simply an ingenious disguise for the revival of the rack and wheel, which were inevitable corollaries from its persecuting spirit. It was powerfully opposed by Townshend. Wake, archbishop of Canterbury, abandoning all the principles of his former life, supported it; but Dr. Kennet, bishop of Peterborough, denounced it in immeasured terms as an attempt to set up a protestant inquisition. The earl of Peterborough declared that though he was for a parliamentary king, he had no desire for a parliamentary god, or a parliamentary religion; and after a violent debate it was rejected.

A second stand was made by the intolerant churchmen in the upper house, upon the occasion of a bill to relieve the quakers from the disabilities under which they were placed by the form of affirmation they were required to take in lieu of oaths. The affirmation contained the expression "in the presence of Almighty God," to which they conscientiously objected, and which operated practically to exclude them from all the advantages of the law and of their rights as citizens. They merely required the repeal of the words containing the name of the deity, binding themselves at the same time to submit to the penalties of perjury, should their affirmation be in any instance violated. The integrity of principle they had manifested under the law as it stood, suffering imprisonment and loss of property, and of civil franchises, in preference to sacrificing their reli-

gious scruples, afforded the best guarantee of the purity with which they would avail themselves of any privileges of exemption that might be accorded to them; but the bigotry of a large section of the ecclesiastical body resisted the humble and reasonable prayer of their petition. The celebrated Atterbury was astonished that such an indulgence should be allowed to people who could hardly be considered Christians; and the clergy of London formally petitioned the house to show that the contemplated measure would be likely to endanger the tithes, and to protest against "such condescensions by a Christian legislation, to a set of men who renounced the divine institutions of Christ, particularly that by which the faithful are initiated into his religion, and denominated Christians, and who could not on that account, according to the uniform judgment and practice of the catholic church, be deemed worthy of that sacred name." The innate contradiction of those arguments is almost as monstrous as their bigotry is revolting. To assert that the quakers are not Christians, and then to insist, for that very reason, that they should be subjected to a christian test, by way of security to the state, is worthy only of that class of professional believers whose faith is founded in tithes, and who are ready at all times to violate the divine charities of religion, for the preservation of its temporal emoluments. But this effort failed even more signally than the Blasphemy bill; and the act to relieve the quakers was carried with a decisive majority.

The panic produced by the extensive insolvencies to which the frauds of the South Sea Company were accessory, induced Walpole to direct his attention to such measures of retrenchment in the public expenditure, and of encouragement to industry and commercial enterprize, as would be likely to repair the calamities inflicted on the country by that lamentable speculation. The king exhibited an anxious disposition to assist his ministers in this laudable object, and caused a message to be delivered to parliament, announcing his resolution to diminish his expenses, and proposing that a deficiency in the civil list

amounting to 550,000*l.* caused by the profligate career of Sunderland, should be supplied by a deduction from the salaries and wages of all offices, pensions, and other payments dependent on the crown. A bill to this effect, imposing a duty of sixpence in the pound, was accordingly introduced and passed both houses. Great difficulties arose, however, in the debate on the navy debt, estimated at 1,700,000*l.* This question was brought forward in the last session of the first septennial parliament. Walpole foresaw the objections that would be made to the demand for a supply to such an enormous amount for services that were undertaken against the common sense of the country, and it was only by the most dexterous parliamentary management, and after a vehement discussion, that he succeeded in carrying the vote with a large majority. His personal influence, re-uniting the dishevelled ranks of the whig party, bore down all opposition; and his brilliant financial talents enabled him to make ample compensation for this unpopular levy, by a comprehensive commercial code, which not only relieved the nation from a variety of vexatious burthens, but afforded increased facilities to the expansion of trade and manufactures. By this vast experiment, which excited considerable solicitude at the time, a multiplicity of petty duties, payable on the importation of raw materials, and the exportation of manufactured goods, were abolished. Serious fears were entertained that the diminution of the revenue would lead to ruinous consequences; but the event justified the confidence of the minister, and furnished a fresh proof of his political sagacity.

Nor did Walpole, in the midst of these cares, forget the pledges that had been made to Sweden. One of the first acts of his administration, was to move for the subsidies guaranteed by the late treaty. It has been urged against him that out of office he opposed the principle which he now came forward to confirm. His defence is obvious. The national faith must be maintained inviolate; and it became as much his duty as a

minister to fulfil the conditions of the treaty, as it was consistent with the general obligations of his party to resist the treaty in the first instance. It was too true at the same time, that the original motives which led to that alliance were indefensible, and that England had all throughout her relations with foreign powers in this reign, acted either with folly or perfidy. Lord Molesworth justly accused the government of weakness and impolicy. "Our engagements," he observed, "are inconsistent and contradictory; our politics are not only variable, but incomprehensible to every man, who, knowing merely the state of Great Britain, was unapprized of the several petty interests of the electorate, which are the secret springs of our transactions abroad; we are in turn the allies and the dupes of all nations." These reproaches were unanswerable, but they applied not to Walpole or the administration he directed, but to his predecessors, and the king. When such topics were so openly discussed by Englishmen, it was not to be expected that Russia, who suffered so severely from the German tactics of the English government, should overlook them. The Russian ambassador in London had been ordered to leave the kingdom, in consequence of his spirited remonstance with the court concerning the Swedish alliance, and the czar published a declaration at St. Petersburg, in which he drew an invidious and galling distinction between what was due to the people of England and their Hanoverian sovereign. "As we perceive," said this document, alluding to the abrupt dismissal of M. Bestuchef, "that all this is done without any regard to the interest of England, and only in favour of the Hanoverian interests,—for which the ministers of England not only neglect the friendship of foreign powers, but do not even spare their own country, which more nearly and more sensibly concerns them—we were unwilling that the English nation, which has no share in that piece of injustice, should suffer for it; and therefore we grant to them all manner of security and free liberty to trade in our dominions." This de-

claration, however, was productive of amicable results, which could hardly have been predicated from its insulting tone; and the treaty of Nystadt, subsequently concluded by England and Russia, restored tranquillity in Europe, by establishing boundaries between the belligerents, with which both were satisfied.

About the same time (1721), a treaty of peace was signed at Madrid between Great Britain and Spain, by which restitution was made of all the effects taken on both sides; and a defensive alliance was entered into between Great Britain, France, and Spain, with a secret article, by which the latter countries guaranteed to Hanover the possession of Bremen and Verdun. The king of Spain was seduced into this alliance upon the expectation that Gibraltar would be restored to him: an expectation which the king of England gave him abundant reason to indulge, but which he evidently never intended to realise.

Amongst the variety of treaties by which this reign was distinguished, one signed with the emperor of Morocco was, perhaps, the most remarkable for utility, securing the future operations of trade in that quarter, and redeeming from present slavery a considerable number of British subjects.

1722. The dissolution of the Parliament was followed at short intervals by the deaths of two individuals celebrated in their day for qualities which in different ways exercised a visible influence upon their age.

Sunderland expired in April, worn out by disappointed ambition and humiliated pride. It may be affirmed of him, that his boldness was equal to his duplicity, and that he never risked the success of any measure he undertook by hesitating about the means of accomplishing it, good or evil. Cunning, skilful, and faithless, he secured the favour of the king by ministering to his worst passions, and contrived to retain office against the will of the people, by devoting all his energies to the anti-national policy of the monarch. A jobber in the funds, and a hypocrite in the council, he

pawned his honour in the stocks, and sacrificed his country in the senate. A conspirator in the palace against the heir to the throne, he continued to preserve the inauspicious favour of the sovereign, even after his disgraceful retreat from the administration, by a malignant and treacherous hostility to the prince.* Nor did his influence cease with his life. He bequeathed his dangerous ascendancy to the wily Cartaret, who laboured to neutralise at the treasury his less crafty associate Townshend.

The duke of Marlborough, to whom Sunderland was allied by marriage, died in June. His victories entitled him to a gorgeous funeral, but his private vices covered his name with contempt. Love of money was the besetting sin of his life; and he abandoned his party when he could gain nothing more by fidelity to his principles. Even the glory of his military achievements did not invest his character with dignity, and while the conqueror received the homage of a grateful nation, the statesman and the diplomatist were held in aversion and obloquy. He was more indebted for the position he enjoyed to the capacity of his wife, and the accidents of fortune, than to any merits of his own, which at best were of a mean and grovelling order. Uneducated and distrustful of his own resources, he relied upon his natural caution in all difficult emergencies, and escaped failure by prudently evading responsibility. Having accumulated great wealth in the course of a singularly prosperous career, the grand aim of his existence was attained, and he sunk into dotage and obscurity. The last years of his life presented a melancholy spectacle of

* Sunderland is strongly suspected of having intrigued against the prince of Wales, and of even conspiring to remove him from the kingdom. The hatred of the king was so rooted against his son, that it is said he would have consented to the restoration of the banished family, to prevent him from succeeding to the throne. Lord Orford relates a conversation with Sunderland, in which this design was darkly insinuated; and adds that after the king's death, a proposal was found in the royal cabinet, in the handwriting of Stanhope, for seizing the prince, and conveying him to America. Coxe relates the same story, but says that the paper was in Sunderland's writing. However that may be, it is quite certain that Sunderland preserved the king's favour, by lending himself to his majesty's unnatural prejudices against the prince.

imbecility; but his death revived the sentiments formerly kindled by the heroic actions of his youth, and his obsequies were conducted with that prodigal pomp which warriors extort from the superstition and wonder of mankind.

At the close of the session, his majesty obscurely indicated his distrust of the temper of the times, expressing, however, his conviction that his people would not suffer themselves to be imposed upon, and betrayed into their own destruction. Even thus early he had reason to suspect the plot which the malcontents, taking advantage of the disturbances caused by the South Sea affair, were now rapidly bringing to maturity. In the meanwhile, the elections proceeded with great zeal all over the kingdom, giving upon the final result a large majority to the court.

Upon information received from the duke of Orleans, rapid preparations were made to meet the impending danger, which was greatly magnified by the fears of the people. A camp was pitched in Hyde Park to protect the metropolis; troops were hastily ordered over from Ireland; many disaffected persons were arrested in Scotland; Mr. Horace Walpole was sent to Holland to desire the States to keep in readiness the troops guaranteed by the barrier treaty; and colonel Churchill was despatched on a private commission to France, to ascertain how far the reports received from that country were well-founded. The effect of all these movements was highly prejudicial to the public credit: the timorous and disaffected made a run upon the Bank, and the South Sea stock fell to 77. Loyal addresses were got up in various places to re-assure the confidence of the country; and the king, laying aside his intended journey to the continent, made a royal progress to Salisbury, Portsmouth, and other towns, where he was received with extraordinary demonstrations of joy.

Before the meeting of Parliament, however, information more precise as to the nature of the conspiracy, and the persons implicated in it, having been received

by government, several individuals were seized by the king's messenger. Carte, a non-juring clergyman, Neynoe, an Irish priest, Layer, a counsellor in the Temple, and several other persons, were arrested on a charge of high treason; and Atterbury, bishop of Rochester and dean of Westminster, was apprehended in his house, and carried before the privy council, who, having examined him, and secured his papers, committed him to the Tower. This event produced so much excitement through the country, that it was considered advisable to open the session of Parliament at once on the 9th of October, instead of proroguing it as had been usual on former occasions.

In the speech from the throne, his majesty announced the discovery of a conspiracy against his person and government in favour of the Pretender, and urgently called upon the Parliament for assistance, referring to the equity and liberality of his past conduct, as affording the strongest claim upon their support. The demand was ardently responded to by both houses; a large augmentation of the military force was voted, and the habeas corpus act was suspended for the unprecedented term of twelve months. Walpole stated that the plot had been formed so far back as Christmas; that the conspirators had applied to foreign powers for aid; and, failing in that hope, they resolved to take advantage of the confusion arising from the South Sea project; that their plan was to seize upon the Tower, the Bank, and the Exchange, and to secure the persons of the king and the prince; and he concluded by promising to lay a full account of all the particulars before the House in due season. But this account was never satisfactorily rendered, and it may be inferred that the plot was exaggerated in its details by the apprehensions of the government.

In the mean time the proceedings against suspected persons were prosecuted with vigour. The duke of Norfolk, and the lords Orrery, North, and Grey were apprehended on presumption; Layer was convicted of

high treason, for enlisting men for the service of the Pretender, and executed; several imputed conspirators were punished by pains and penalties; and Atterbury, after a solemn trial, chiefly remarkable for the asperity and unrelenting hostility of his accusers*, was deprived of his episcopal dignity, and sentenced to banishment for life.

The evidence against the bishop of Rochester was sufficiently clear to establish his participation in the frantic design of the Pretender, who, unfortunately for all his adherents, issued a ridiculous proclamation at Lucca, proposing with singular modesty, that if king George would relinquish to him the throne of England, he would in return consent to his retaining the title of king in his native dominions, graciously engaging to leave his succession to Great Britain secure. This absurd manifesto, instead of assisting his cause in England, rendered it more desperate than ever, by inducing the two houses of parliament to address his majesty with fresh assurances of their support against the "impotent efforts of an attainted fugitive, bred up in the maxims of tyranny and superstition."

The banishment of Atterbury,—a man distinguished for his learning and his wit, and obnoxious only by his religious bigotry and false ambition,—was followed by the reversal of the act of attainder against Bolingbroke. The exiles met at Calais — the one going into banishment for life, the other returning to resume his estates in his native land. Hearing that Bolingbroke was looking for a passage to England, Atterbury, in the bitterness of the contrast, exclaimed, "Then we are exchanged!"† But, although Bolingbroke was restored to

* Yonge, the mover of the bill, declared that Atterbury was a dishonour to a church conspicuous for its loyalty, and concluded a ferocious harangue, by a denunciation from Holy Writ:—"Let his habitation be desolate, and let no man dwell therein, and his bishoprick let another take."

† Atterbury is celebrated in English literature as the intimate friend of Pope and Swift, who continued to correspond with him during his exile. But they appear to have been ignorant of his real character, which was not fully developed until his private papers were seized and published after his death. Although he was a strict protestant, having even attempted the conversion of Pope, he favoured the interests of the pretender, not only by

his title and his estates, he was excluded from his seat in the house of peers, and doomed on his return to see Walpole, whom of all men he hated most, at the head of the administration, and his ancient coadjutors, Oxford and Harcourt, holding high offices, for which his superior talents better qualified him, and for which his restless ambition pined in vain. Stung by the mortification of exclusion, and resenting the obligation of pardon from the hands of his political antagonists, he joined the tories, and devoted himself to the ungrateful labour of opposing the government to whom he owed his liberty.* The cabinet, however, was too strong to be easily shaken. Its foundations were deeply laid in parliamentary power, and the genius of Walpole had effectually succeeded in infusing a close and systematic unanimity into the whole

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secret measures before his banishment, but by joining the cabals afterwards in France. He conspired with Hay and Murray to undermine the influence of Mar and Dillon, and no sooner succeeded in compassing that object than, becoming jealous of his former confederates, and failing to obtain the first place in the management of the pretender's affairs, he abandoned the cause for a time, and then returned to embark in fresh schemes for the restoration of the Stuarts. After a few years of restless intrigues, he died in Paris on the 15th of February, 1731, in the seventieth year of his age. His body was conveyed to England, and buried in Westminster Abbey.

* "Here I am," he observed in a letter to Swift, "two thirds restored, my person safe (unless I meet hereafter with harder treatment than even that of sir Walter Raleigh) and my estate, with all the other property I have acquired, or may acquire secured to me. But the attainder is kept carefully and prudently in force, lest so corrupt a member should come again into the house of lords, and his bad leaven should sour that sweet untainted mass."—See *Swift's Works*, vol. xix. This was the point that galled Bolingbroke's spirit. He never forgave Horace Walpole for declining his interference in the French negotiations, which Bolingbroke, being then a resident at Paris, and intimate with the duke of Bourbon, and his mistress, madame de Prie, proffered, in the expectation of becoming a confidential channel of communication between the two governments; and to Robert Walpole he attributed, in a letter to the king, his exclusion from the house of peers, accusing him, at the same time, of meanness and treachery under the mask of good will.—See *Coxe's Walpole*, vol. ii., *Correspondence, Period 3., Art. Bolingbroke*. To the duchess of Kendal he was mainly indebted for the act of grace which permitted him to return to England. Walpole, in a conversation with Etough, charges him with having bribed her through her niece. "He informed me," says Etough, "that the bill in favour of St. John is wholly to be ascribed to the influence of the duchess. Either the present viscount Chetwind, or his brother William, conveyed 11,000*l.* from St. John's lady to lady Walsingham, the duchess's niece." To Walpole his hatred was as open as it was unmitigable. He frankly declared himself his enemy, and not long after his return, published in the "Craftsman," a political paper, a series of violent attacks upon the administration, in which he assailed Walpole with the bitterest hostility.

party over which his influence was now universally admitted.

1723. The principal business of the session was a bill for levying a sum of 100,000*l.* on the estates of all Roman catholics, on the shallow pretext that it was the constant endeavour of the papists to subvert the establishment. The ministers acquitted them of any concern in the recent conspiracy, but observed, that it was well known that many of them were implicated in the late rebellion. And this most illiberal measure (afterwards extended to all non-jurors) was carried by a large majority, in open violation of justice, and against the loud remonstrances of some of the most enlightened supporters of the administration. The charge against the catholics was general, vague, and unsubstantiated, and the penalty levied upon them for crimes, which it was only presumed they might have a disposition to commit, was specific, odious, and oppressive. Even the protestants complained of the severity of this enactment, as it affected themselves; for it required all persons to take certain oaths to ensure their exemption from its penalties, which put them to great personal inconvenience, and produced considerable discontent. "People in general," says a contemporary writer, "was so terrified with the apprehensions of not only forfeiting their estates in possession if they did not take the oaths, but also what they had in reversion, limitation, ever so remote, or the least relation to or expectation of any,—nay, with regard to their money or effects of any sort —that the whole nation, almost men, women, and children, capable of taking an oath, flocked to the places where the quarter sessions were holden, that they might, by swearing to the government, free themselves and their families from the danger, as they thought, of losing their fortunes to it. I saw a great deal of it; and it was a strange, as well as a ridiculous sight, to see people crowding to give a testimony of their allegiance to a government, and cursing it at the same time for giving them the trouble of so doing, and for the fright they

were put into by it; and I am satisfied more real disaffection to the king and his family arose from it than from any thing which happened in that time." * It required all the popularity arising from his majesty's repeated demonstrations of religious toleration towards the dissenters (for it does not appear that his creed was sufficiently comprehensive to embrace the catholics, whom, perhaps, being naturally a weak and timid man, he was afraid of encouraging) to counterbalance this single act of violent aggression upon his catholic subjects.

This was the moment chosen by his majesty for rewarding the services of Walpole: to mark, perhaps, the more emphatically his approbation of a measure which struck so boldly at the resources of his domestic enemies. The principal ministers had hitherto been members of the House of Lords, and Walpole was offered a peerage. He declined it on several grounds, partly because he felt that his peculiar talents for finance pointed to the Commons as the legitimate arena of his labours, and partly because his individual influence, and consequently his utility, would be diminished in the upper house.† It may be presumed also, that he considered it more consonant with the spirit of the British constitution, that the head of the administration should discharge his parliamentary duties in the lower house; a doctrine which has been subsequently acted upon with more frequency than in former years, and which, perhaps, may be uniformly adopted when the basis of representation becomes more extended. Walpole, however, waiving the proffered dignity for himself, accepted it for his son, who was created baron Walpole of Norfolk. The patent bears a remarkable and honourable testimony to the great merits of the minister, who "having highly recommended himself to our royal favour, by his many services to us, to our house, and to his own country, we did not think him unworthy to be advanced to the rank of the peers of

* Onslow. † Coxe's Memoirs of Walpole.

this realm; but though he rather chooses to merit the highest titles than to wear them, we have however thought fit, in order to ennoble his family, to confer on the son the honour due to the father, &c." *

On the 27th May the king closed the session; and on the 3d of June, he set out for Hanover, accompanied by Townshend and Cartaret. As usual, some promotions were conferred before his majesty's departure; and the duke of Norfolk, and the lords Orrery, North, and Grey, and others who had been imprisoned on account of the late plot, were admitted to bail.

The struggle for ascendancy between the secretaries was carried on with unabated hostility during their stay at Herenhausen; but with Robert Walpole at home, Horace Walpole in Paris, and the duchess of Kendal on his side, whom he had recently gained over, Townshend rapidly out-stripped his rival in court influence. The affairs of Hanover formed the grand point of their diplomacy, although interests of a more important class ostensibly occupied their attention. The tedious congress of Cambray had terminated in general disappointment; and all the powers who were parties to it, now resolved to enter into separate negotiations for the attainment of their own objects. Sweden and Russia were about to conclude a treaty favourable to the duke of Holstein's pretensions to Sleswic, which his Britannic majesty had guaranteed to Denmark; and this arrangement obviously threatened the security of Bremen and Verdun. On the other hand France had been reconciled to Spain, and the Regent (who had just married his two daughters to the prince of Asturias, and the eldest son of Philip II., by his second wife), was projecting a marriage between the king of France and the infanta of Spain, then three years old. The danger of this alliance was, that it would strengthen Spain in her demands for the restitution of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, and render the friendship of Great Britain unimportant to France. These difficulties were considerably in-

* Tindal.

creased by the establishment of an imperial East India Company at Ostend, which was regarded with commercial jealousy both by England and Holland.* The position in which the emperor was placed by these conflicting circumstances, was hardly less embarrassing than that of Great Britain. He might coalesce with Sweden and Russia, to the complete severance of the new Hanoverian provinces, which he still refused to invest without the payment of an enormous sum, said to be one million sterling; and he did not affect to conceal his indignation towards the king of England, by whom he considered himself abandoned. In this crisis what part was king George to act? If he declared against the emperor, he perilled the safety of his German dominions — if he joined him he gave a tacit support to the Ostend company, and incurred the hostility of France and Spain. As the dilemma thickened upon him, the regent of France died, and was succeeded by the duke of Bourbon, who, through the able negotiations of Horace Walpole, became the firm ally of England. Luck was still at the side of the English monarch, and, although he failed in propitiating the emperor on behalf of Hanover, his journey was not altogether useless. He formed a union with Prussia for the protection of the Protestants, and bound Denmark by a stricter alliance, thus escaping from a general war by a fortuitous combination of favourable accidents. But he still held his cherished acquisitions by a frail tenure; and he returned to England in December, after an absence of seven months, trembling with apprehensions for his beloved principality.

The session of parliament opened on the 9th January. 1724.
The flourishing state of trade, regenerated by the activity of Walpole, furnished a fair topic of congratu-

* A vote against this company passed the English parliament, and subsequently an act declaring it a high crime and misdemeanour in any British subject to countenance the undertaking. King George endeavoured in vain to dissuade the court of Vienna from the project. He could procure nothing more than vague promises that no treaties should be violated; a marked reproof against his own want of faith.

lation. Resolutions were adopted for the reduction of the national debt, and useful reforms were introduced into the manner of collecting the revenue. The additional vote of 4000 men, adopted in the previous year on account of the conspiracy, was continued, but not without a violent opposition in the house of peers on the part of the lords Orrery, North, and Grey, who had been recently set at liberty by the government, and whose conduct on this occasion was justly characterised as being alike insidious and ungrateful. After a short session parliament was prorogued in April.

The intrigues of Cartaret against Walpole and Townshend were now brought gradually, and not without considerable difficulty to a final close, in his signal discomfiture, and the complete triumph of his rivals. One of his closest friends in the cabinet was the earl of Cadogan, who was supported by the remnant of Marlborough's party, and who held the important posts of commander-in-chief and master of the ordnance. Cadogan, who was a noted swordsman and linguist, had become a marked favourite with the king on account of the frankness of his manners, and his familiarity with the languages of the continent. Walpole, to whom he had rendered himself obnoxious, desired to remove him; but the king gave a decided negative to the proposal. This repulse was hailed by Cartaret and Cadogan as a certain omen of Walpole's approaching downfal.* But they miscalculated the energy and influence of the minister.

Serious discontents had recently arisen in Ireland from the introduction of a new copper coinage, under a patent granted by the king to one William Wood, an extensive proprietor of iron and copper works in England, to furnish that country with halfpence and farthings to the amount of 100,000*l.* This patent had been issued in consequence of representations made to his majesty of the deficiency of small money for commercial purposes in Ireland. Sunderland, through whom

* Coxe.

it was procured, gave the disposal of it to the duchess of Kendal, who sold it to Wood. When this money came to be circulated, an extraordinary clamour was raised against it; Swift inflamed the country with tracts and letters affirming the coin to be of a base and inferior quality; and Cartaret, by imputing the disturbances to the misconduct of Walpole and his friend the duke of Grafton, then lord-lieutenant of Ireland, endeavoured to subvert the rival ministers in the favour of the king. In the midst of the excitement the Irish parliament passed resolutions to the effect that false representations had been made to the king in order to obtain the patent; that the money wanted weight; that the importing and uttering the coin was injurious to trade, and destructive of the rights of the subject; and that it was prejudicial to the kingdom to grant the right of coinage to private persons. Addresses founded on these resolutions were transmitted to the king, who immediately ordered an assay of the coin to be made, by the result of which it appeared that the terms of the patent had been strictly fulfilled, that the money was equal to that used in the English circulation, and superior to that which had been coined for Ireland in former reigns. The popular rage, however, continued; and as Cartaret had taken so active a part in impugning the administration of Grafton, Walpole adroitly seized the opportunity to recal that nobleman, and appoint Cartaret in his place. This was a final blow to his power. He felt that his influence with the king would be destroyed in his absence, and he delayed his departure to the last moment, still hoping for some new turn of events. But he was disappointed. He went to Ireland, attempted to force Wood's halfpence on the country, and failed. In the following year the obnoxious coinage was graciously abandoned in a speech from the throne*; Walpole firmly declaring that he

* Wood received a compensation in pensions of 3000*l.* per annum for eight years.

would not urge any measure, however laudable, contrary to the general sense of the people.*

The duke of Grafton was made lord chamberlain; many of Walpole's friends were placed in minor appointments, and the duke of Newcastle, a nobleman whose capacity fitted him for subserviency, was nominated to the vacancy occasioned by Cartaret's removal. Walpole and Townshend were now safe, and commanded the whole machinery of government. The former was soon after created a knight of the order of the bath, and subsequently installed knight of the garter—the only commoner who had ever received that distinction†; and the latter was honoured with the garter, in a special manner, by the hands of the king. So complete was their ascendancy over his majesty, that they prevailed upon him to defer another journey to Hanover, which he had previously fixed upon for the recess.

Parliament met again on the 12th November; but this session was as brief and as barren of incidents as the last. The 4000 additional troops were again proposed, vehemently resisted, and voted. A new opponent to the administration appeared in the person of the celebrated Pulteney, who commenced his opposition in the
1725. present session. The occasion which led to his hostility

* Walpole acted strictly on this principle, in reference to his great measure of Excise, which is ridiculed with stupid virulence by Dr. Johnson, in the definition he gives of the word in his dictionary, and which was objectionable only because it was in advance of his age. He carried it by majorities always decreasing, and finding at last, that his majority was under twenty, and that the people were so much against it, that it could not be maintained except by the aid of troops, he gave it up. "No revenue," he exclaimed, "ought to be levied in this free country that it requires the sabre and the bayonet to collect."

† Young, the most servile of all poets, congratulated Walpole on this circumstance, in a piece called the "Instalment." Although it is not easy to predicate the uses to which poetry could turn such a subject, the panegyrist found something to say about the gloriousness of the new knight, to whose installation he summoned the shades of the departed brotherhood.

"Ye mighty dead, ye gartered sons of praise!
Our morning stars! Our boast in former days!
Which hov'ring o'er, your purple wings display,
Lur'd by the pomp of this distinguish'd day,
Stoop and attend."

The minister, however, despised such contemptible offerings, and the slavish writer was left unrewarded and unnoticed.

was an unexpected message from the crown for the sum of 500,000*l.* to discharge the debts of the civil list, incurred to that amount during the space of three years. His majesty had formerly pledged himself to retrenchments, but now declared that he had found them impracticable, and that the necessities of his government had involved him in some "extraordinary expenses," which he hoped his loyal commons would believe had been employed for the honour of the crown and the interest of the people. Pulteney, who held the office of cofferer of the household — a post unworthy of his great talents — objected to this demand, wondered how such debts could have been contracted, and hinted that the civil list was appropriated to the benefit of those who were so eager to supply its deficiencies. The vote, however, was carried by an overwhelming majority, and Pulteney was dismissed. He immediately joined the opposition, and was at once recognised as their leader.* The only remaining event that disturbed the tranquillity of the legislature was the impeachment of the earl of Macclesfield, lord high chancellor, for the sale of places, and for the abuse of his trust as guardian of children and lunatics. After a patient trial of twenty days, he was sentenced to pay a fine of 30,000*l.*, and to be confined in the Tower until it was discharged. The session ended on the 31st May, 1725.

The perplexed web of European politics called the king again to Hanover immediately after he dismissed the parliament. The recent death of Peter the Great had devolved the crown of Russia upon his consort, the empress Catherine, who, determining to maintain the articles of the treaty of Stockholm, rigorously demanded

* Pulteney long enjoyed the title of the "Great Commoner" before he was tempted to merge his influence in a peerage. He was the most powerful of all the opponents of Walpole, who used to say of him, that he feared his tongue more than another man's sword. Speaker Onslow describes him as "having the most popular parts for public speaking of any man he ever knew." His eloquence was an era in the senate; but he carried his opposition to the factious extremity of plunging England into the calamities of a war, for the sole purpose of counteracting the pacific policy of Walpole.

of Denmark the restitution of Sleswic, or an equivalent, evidently signifying the disputed tracts of Bremen and Verdun. In vain the senate remonstrated against the vast armament she was preparing to enforce her demand, entreating her to try the effect of a peaceful negotiation in the first instance. She desired them not to dare to offer her such mean-spirited counsel; reminded them that the duke of Holstein, who had been fraudulently stripped of his possessions, and had taken sanctuary in her country, was contracted to her daughter, and that she was bound to see justice done to him. "It is for my interest and glory," she added, "as well as yours, to convince the world that I have power to see justice done to my family, and that I am resolved to make use of it." Negotiations, however, were entered into, which suspended her resolution throughout the summer; but she still insisted upon the unconditional surrender of Sleswic, or a solid equivalent.

In the meanwhile a tempest was brooding over the affairs of Spain and France, which threatened to descend speedily upon the whole surface of Europe. The young king of France had been attacked by a dangerous fever, and this circumstance awakened the nation, for the first time, to the dangers of a disputed succession. It was consequently resolved soon after his recovery, with a view to the early marriage of his majesty, that the infanta of Spain, then only five years of age, and actually residing at Paris, should be sent back to Madrid, with a respectful explanation of the causes of her dismissal. The king of Spain, indignant at this abrupt breach of contract, declared his determination to separate from France for ever, protesting that blood enough could never be shed to avenge so gross an insult. He further ordered his plenipotentiaries at Cambray to reject the mediation of France, and to submit the final settlement of the points in dispute between him and the emperor to the king of England. But this was too dangerous an honour, to be accepted. The alliance of France was essential to the interests of England; and, although the hand of the

French king, proffered to one of the daughters of the prince of Wales, was declined by the advice of the administration, the most cordial sentiments of friendship were exchanged between the court of Great Britain and cardinal Fleury, who had just taken the duke of Bourbon's place at the helm of the French government. The wishes of the nation, disappointed of a marriage with an English princess, were happily accomplished in July, by the union of the king of France with the princess Maria of Poland.

The refusal of the king of England, to accept the mediation at Cambray, provoked unbounded resentment at Madrid. The congress was immediately broken up, and the emperor, entering at once into the views of his catholic majesty, concluded a treaty in April, known by the name of the Treaty of Vienna, by which the two sovereigns confirmed the articles of the Quadruple Alliance, and Philip became guarantee of the Austrian succession according to the Pragmatic Sanction, or imperial edict, ratified by the diet of the empire, which declared the dominions of that house to be a perpetual and indivisible feoffment, limited to the heirs-general of the emperor. The validity of the Ostend company's charter was also recognised by this treaty; and it was presumed that it entertained secret articles, providing for intermarriages between the two royal families, for the forcible restitution of Gibraltar, and the restoration of the pretender. That such secret articles, however, had any real existence, may now be reasonably doubted; but they were so currently believed at the time, as to inspire the most serious apprehensions in England. A defensive alliance and mutual guarantee was immediately entered into at Hanover between the ministers of Great Britain, France, and Prussia, to which Denmark and Holland afterwards acceded, having for its object a distinct opposition to the treaty of Vienna.* All disguise was now

* This treaty was regarded at the time, and continues to be so interpreted, as involving the sacrifice of British to Hanoverian interests. Lord Chesterfield said that it enabled "Hanover to ride triumphant on the shoulders of

at end. The great powers had openly taken their stand upon intelligible principles. The British ambassador at Madrid was treated with contempt; jacobite airs were played at court; the partisans of the pretender were received with honours; a plan of invasion was handed in by Ormond; and the Austrian minister haughtily declared that his master would give laws to Europe.

1726. Having accomplished the only alternative left to him in these circumstances, the king returned to England, encountering a violent storm on the way, and opened the parliament on the 9th of January, 1726. The "new troubles and disturbances in Europe" were cautiously touched upon in the royal speech, and Walpole silently laid the treaty of Hanover upon the table of the house of commons, leaving his brother, who was more skilled in the art of diplomacy, to delineate its history, and de-

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England;" and the great lord Chatham described it as "a treaty, the tendency of which is discovered in the name; a treaty by which we disunited ourselves from Austria, destroyed that building which we now may perhaps endeavour without success to raise again, and weakened the only power which it was our interest to strengthen." Coxe, alone, finds something in it to admire. He says, that instead of being favourable to Hanover, it was directly the reverse, since it exposed the electorate to the vengeance of the house of Austria; and that the king was secretly afraid to enter into it from the dread of being put under the ban of the empire. The answer to all this is in the simple fact, that by this treaty, the king secured an amount of protection for Hanover, which he could not have procured by any other means, and which he did not want for any other purpose. The contracting parties mutually stipulated to furnish, in case of an attack, England and France respectively, 8000 foot and 4000 horse, and Prussia 3000 foot and 2000 horse, or the value in ships and money. If the king risked an invasion of Hanover, by entering into such a treaty in self-protection against the Ostend company and the Spanish and German alliance, it must be granted that he established at the same time a very effectual means of repelling it. As to the fears about the pretender, they were not entitled to any consideration as an actuating motive; Walpole always thought they were exaggerated, and Coxe himself admits; that that able minister never wholly approved of the treaty. The best proof of the advantage it was to Hanover is that, so far from producing an aggression on the part of the emperor, it led to the very opposite results, the emperor endeavouring to conciliate the Hanoverians in consequence of this very treaty, instead of levying war upon them, as, under other circumstances, he would unquestionably have done. This conviction of the necessity of avoiding hostilities was so strong, that the empress condescended to correspond with the duchess of Kendal, for the purpose of engaging her influence to infuse pacific sentiments into the mind of the king. Now if Hanover had really been endangered by the treaty, it is not very likely that the empress of Germany would have considered it necessary to propitiate the intercession of the king's mistress for the preservation of peace.

fend its provisions. Horace Walpole, in an harangue of great length and extraordinary ingenuity, recapitulated the intricate narrative of events that had led to this proceeding; pointed out the dangers that were likely to accrue from the treaty of Vienna, the injuries to the English trade and commerce from the establishment of the India company at Ostend, the threats impending over his majesty's dominions in Germany, the perils that encompassed Minorca and Gibraltar; the ambition of the house of Austria to preserve the imperial dignity hereditary in their family, and the obvious inference to be drawn therefrom of a meditated marriage, which might ultimately produce a union under one crown of the vast dominions of Austria, and the entire monarchy of Spain and its appendages, to the total destruction of the balance of power in Europe. The reply of the opposition was simple and concise: — that this treaty, represented to be so wise, so just, and so good, would eventually engage England in a war for the defence of the king's German dominions, in express violation of the act of settlement. But such arguments were thrown away upon the administration. The eloquence of Walpole had reduced the chaos of treaties to such a form of harmony, that the house voted an address to his majesty, with an overwhelming majority, expressing their full approbation of the treaty of Hanover, and their unfeigned gratitude for the sagacity with which his majesty had disappointed the machinations of the emperor and the king of Spain. The same majority completed the triumph of his majesty's foreign policy, by voting an extraordinary supply and an increase of seamen, and the parliament was prorogued on the 24th of May, after having accorded munificent means to the administration for carrying on those measures of active hostility for which extensive preparations were now rapidly set on foot.

The first movements were directed to the North, where the danger was most urgent. A powerful fleet was dispatched to the Baltic under the command of sir

Charles Wager. The object was to detach Sweden from Russia. But this could not have been effected by warlike demonstrations alone. It was necessary to supplant the influence of the Holstein and Muscovite parties at the court of Stockholm, and this was effectually accomplished by a prodigal outlay of bribes. "Our interest there," says lord Townshend, in a letter to Walpole, "has increased in proportion to the sums that have been distributed." The English squadron in the Baltic brought these intrigues to a successful issue; inspiring Denmark with courage, enabling Sweden to recede from her alliance with Russia, and, by drawing both into the treaty of Hanover, compelling the empress Catherine to abandon her protégé, the duke of Holstein.

About this time, Ripperda, the Spanish minister who succeeded to the influence that had formerly been wielded by Alberoni, was suddenly disgraced. The history of this man is a remarkable episode in the annals of Europe. He was a native of Holland, descended from an ancient family, and possessed all the advantages of a liberal education. Having served in a military occupation during the war of the Spanish succession, he was sent envoy to Madrid, where his brilliant talents and aspiring temper speedily recommended him to Alberoni, whom he at last supplanted, embracing the Roman catholic religion (which he had formerly renounced) for the advancement of his views, and confirming his power at court by negotiating the treaty of Vienna. But his arrogance surrounded him with enemies; and failing in the gigantic projects he planned — which far transcended the wildest schemes of his predecessor — he was dismissed from office, with a pension. The exultation of the populace was unbounded, and he would probably have been sacrificed to their vengeance had he not taken refuge in the house of the British ambassador, to whom he betrayed the secret articles of the treaty. Unable to protect him, however, without an open rupture with the Spanish government, the ambassador

allowed him to be taken by force from his residence, and consigned to the castle of Segovia, where he was confined for fifteen months. His subsequent adventures were not less marked by vicissitudes and indomitable energy. Making his escape from prison through the aid of a servant girl, he effected his passage to England, where he lived in great magnificence, and, it is said, even contemplated a similar elevation to power in the councils of the state which he had achieved in Spain. But finding the soil unfavourable to the growth of such frantic plots, he withdrew to Holland; and afterwards, animated by a spirit of vengeance against Spain, entered the service of the emperor of Morocco, embraced the Mahometan religion, was created a bashaw, obtained the command of the army, and the office of prime minister, and distinguished himself by many acts of courage and skill in the field against the Spaniards. At last, when the emperor was dethroned by Muley Ali he deserted him, and retired to Tetuan, where he died in the catholic faith at a very advanced age.

To the information given by this extraordinary political cameleon to the English ambassador at Madrid, must be traced the spring of all the rumours respecting the alleged secret articles of the treaty of Vienna. So deeply was the government impressed with a perfect reliance upon his statements, that in a speech from the throne on the opening of the following session on the 17th of January, his majesty explicitly communicated 1727.
the fact, that he had received intelligence on which he could entirely depend, that the placing the pretender upon the throne of this kingdom was one of the articles of the secret engagements; and if time should evince that the giving up the trade of this nation to one power, and Gibraltar and Port Mahon to another, was made the price and reward of imposing upon this kingdom a popish pretender, what indignation must it raise in the breast of every protestant Briton! * The whole speech,

* Parl. Hist. vol. viii. p. 524.

which was of unusual length, breathed a proud national spirit, and appealed to the support of parliament in language so eager, firm, and exciting, that it produced an unparalleled effect both in and out of doors. An address of thanks was carried by a majority of 251 against 81; no less than 20,000 seamen were unanimously voted; the army was augmented by 26,000 men; and the supplies demanded for the exigencies of the current year were granted, not merely without opposition, but with enthusiastic acclamation. Even the opposition participated in the feeling of indignation provoked by the discovery of the insidious design thus explicitly charged upon the court of Vienna.

It is now, perhaps, unlikely that the historical doubt which hangs over the truth of the accusation will ever be removed; but it is certain that the emperor adopted that course, which, however imprudent in other respects, was the best calculated to vindicate himself from the aspersions thrown upon him by the king of England. Count Palm, the imperial minister in London, promptly advised his master to contradict the assertions contained in the royal speech; and was ordered, in return, to present a memorial to the king, denying in the most solemn manner the existence of any secret articles, and demanding reparation for the great injuries which had been done to him by such imputations. This memorial, written in a highly intemperate tone, and very indiscreetly appealing from the English king to the English people, was printed and extensively circulated, so that the whole nation should be made acquainted with its contents. It was no sooner submitted to the house of commons than even the leading members of the opposition agreed in reprobating the audacious insult it cast upon the crown; and an address, drawn up by Walpole, was unanimously adopted, expressing the strongest resentment at the indignity offered to his most sacred majesty by the memorial delivered by M. de Palm, and at his insolence in printing and dispersing it through the kingdom. Palm was immediately ordered to leave the

country; the British resident quitted Vienna, and as the Spanish minister had previously taken an abrupt departure, war appeared to be inevitable.

Spain rashly commenced hostilities by a descent upon Gibraltar, and the emperor, who had succeeded in seducing Prussia from the treaty of Hanover, and concluded an alliance with Catherine of Russia, had already collected an army of 30,000 men, ready to pour into the plains of Holland. But want of concert in their operations weakened by dividing their strength. Had they acted together — had Austria assisted Spain in the Straits, or had Spain been enabled to assist Austria with subsidies — a sanguinary war must have been the consequence. But this result was averted by the prudence and resolution of England and her allies. Instead of concentrating the resources at his command upon the defence of Gibraltar, Walpole, who desired above all things to preserve the commerce with Spain, refused, when France offered her mediation, to consider the attack as a *casus fœderis;* knowing that a warlike intervention would lead to the inevitable diffusion of hostilities on a wider theatre of operations. In the same spirit, also, admiral Hosier, who had been sent on an expedition to the Spanish West Indies, was strictly enjoined to avoid reprisals; an instruction which was fulfilled to the letter by that gallant officer, who ultimately fell a victim to the destructive climate in which he was compelled to remain inactive. But with a view to the movements of the emperor, 20,000 Danes and 12,000 Swedes were subsidised by England and France, 12,000 Hessians were taken into the English pay, and a French army was rapidly collected on the frontiers of Germany. While the combined forces were impending like surcharged clouds ready to burst over the empire, the death of Catherine paralysed Charles, who lost in her his most powerful ally. This fatal event loosened all his recent alliances. Prussia, timid and vacillating, shrank from the contest, and the petty princes of Germany, whom he had lately drawn over to his side, now took an independent posi-

tion, and no longer acknowledged the cause of the house of Austria as being identical with that of the empire. Thus circumstanced, it became a matter of necessity to submit; and the emperor, sacrificing Spain to his own security, negotiated a peace with France, England, and Holland, agreeing to suspend the charter of the Ostend company for seven years, and confirming all the treaties in force anterior to 1725. Similar negotiations were entered into with Spain, and the preliminaries were signed in June at Vienna. Orders were immediately issued to restore all the prizes, and to raise the blockades in the ports of the West Indies; and it was expected in return that the siege of Gibraltar would be raised, and the prizes taken from England restored.

All these arrangements were announced to Parliament in the speech at the close of the session; and his majesty having clearly avowed the pacific character of his desires and intentions, the session terminated on the 15th of May. On the 3d of June his majesty departed for Hanover.

At his departure, his majesty was in perfect health, and continued so until he reached Delden, between ten and eleven on the night of the 9th, where he was entertained at a country house of the count de Twittel. He supped heartily *, and having rested well, took his departure early on the following morning. Arrived at Bentheim, he felt indisposed; his hand hung motionless, and his eyes and mouth moved strangely. The surgeon in attendance, supposing it to be an apoplectic fit, opened a vein; and the king, slightly recovering, repeatedly articulated "Osnaburg! Osnaburg!" His impatience to reach his brother, bishop of that place,

* According to some accounts his majesty ate melons at supper; but this is contradicted on later authority, which asserts, that he "ate an orange, but no melon, as was reported." It appears, however, that he died of a fit of indigestion, which is not very surprising, as it is notorious that he was passionately addicted to punch, in which Walpole used to indulge him to the great vexation of the duchess of Kendal, who often attempted to shorten their convivial meetings by making some of her German friends, who were generally present, attempt to break up the party at an early hour. But Walpole was not so easily cozened. He invariably outsat the plot.

was complied with, but before they could accomplish the last stage, his majesty expired. On their arrival at the palace, he was bled, but life was extinct.

Intelligence of the event was instantly forwarded to the duchess of Kendal, who had remained at Delden. Upon hearing what had taken place, it is related of her that she tore her hair, and took the road to Brunswick.

Lord Townshend, who followed the king, finding on his arrival at Osnaburg that his majesty was dead, wrote a letter of congratulation to his successor, and returned to England.

George I. died just as he was about to wind up all the tortuous policies of a reign that took place in England for the benefit of Hanover. His personal character, deducting the profligacy of his private life, which he inherited in his blood, was more respectable and less objectionable than his public reputation. He was essentially good-humoured, strong-hearted, and weak-headed. In matters of business he was punctual but dull, of a very circumscribed capacity, and deficient not only in comprehensive views but in political knowledge. To his friends he was generally honest and kind; but in England the better qualities of his nature laboured under the disadvantage of wanting a vent. He knew nothing of the language, and never cared to acquire it. Coming late to the throne, and totally ignorant of the constitution and usages of the country, it was not to be expected that he could have entered freely into the spirit of institutions so entirely opposed to the petty routine of the narrow sphere in which he was educated. He was, therefore, little more than an instrument in the hands of his advisers, and they, in order to conciliate his favour, and secure their places, indulged his German predilections, to the manifest cost and injury of Great Britain. Utterly destitute of taste in literature or the arts, he resigned himself to sensual enjoyments and mean pursuits. Mistresses, punch, and money were his predominant and habitual passions. He was so avaricious, that the leading whigs were obliged to

advance the necessary means for purchasing the aid of influential auxiliaries, who could not otherwise be won over to support the succession.* But amidst all his defects and errors, it must be recorded to his honour that he was a consistent and earnest advocate of the rights of conscience. He was in advance of his time in the desire he always displayed to establish civil and religious liberty in his dominions, in which he would, probably, have succeeded but for the bitter prejudices left rankling in the public mind by the events of the revolution. If his reign conferred no permanent blessings upon the country, it removed some impediments to the diffusion of liberal principles. He endeavoured to rule England beneficially, but his hands were tied by Hanoverian cords, and whenever he attempted to move he was dragged in that direction. Thus treaties were violated, solemn engagements disregarded, and the national honour sullied. Thus England was entangled in continental alliances, ruinous subsidies, and financial troubles, for objects in which she had no interest whatever. But the inherent and resilient life within her rebounded from his grave, and redeemed her ancient glory.

* Lord John Russell's Memoirs of the Affairs of Europe, vol. i. p. 301.

CHAP. VII.

1727—1731.

ACCESSION OF GEORGE II. — STRUGGLE FOR OFFICE. — WALPOLE'S CABINET RETAINED. — THE KING ADOPTS THE POLICY OF HIS FATHER. — PROCEEDINGS OF THE OPPOSITION. — SCRUTINY INTO THE PUBLIC EXPENDITURE. — REPORT OF THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON THE SINKING FUND. — PRELIMINARIES OF PEACE WITH SPAIN. — CONGRESS AT SOISSONS. — PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE ON THE COMMERCIAL REPRISALS OF SPAIN. — MINISTERIAL DIFFICULTIES WITH THE KING. — DEPARTURE FOR HANOVER. — PACIFIC POLICY OF WALPOLE AND FLEURY. — DIFFERENCES WITH AUSTRIA. — TREATY OF SEVILLE. — SPECIAL PLEADING OF BOLINGBROKE AND HIS FRIENDS. — VIOLENT MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY TOWNSHEND. — BILL FOR PREVENTING LOANS TO FOREIGN POWERS. — SUBSIDIES VOTED. — INCREASING STRENGTH OF THE OPPOSITION. — PENSIONS' BILL. — DISCUSSION ON THE HARBOUR OF DUNKIRK. — RENEWAL OF THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S CHARTER. — THE CRAFTSMAN. — RESIGNATION OF TOWNSHEND. — QUARREL WITH WALPOLE. — NEWCASTLE AND HARRINGTON AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE. — FOREIGN POLICY OF GREAT BRITAIN. — COMPREHENSIVE VIEWS OF WALPOLE. — PROTRACTED NEGOTIATIONS AT VIENNA. — DISCONTENT OF SPAIN. — OPPOSITION TO THE ADDRESS ON THE OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — DIPLOMATIC DILEMMA OF THE AMBASSADOR IN AUSTRIA. SECOND TREATY OF VIENNA. — ITS NATURE AND CONSEQUENCES. — POPULARITY OF THE ADMINISTRATION AT THE CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

GEORGE II. ascended the throne in the 45th year of his age. Although he was nearly as ignorant of the language and constitution of England as his father, he had acquired, by a series of accidents, the favourable opinion of the nation. His English popularity sprang out of an

anecdote*, and was nourished by party spirit and the genius of his wife.†

His majesty was born at Hanover on the 30th of October, 1683, and educated under the direction of his grandmother the electress Sophia. Brought up in a military school, he became a strict disciplinarian, and carried his love of system and punctuality into all the affairs, public and private, in which he was engaged‡. The higher elements of a refined and liberal education were wholly neglected in his youth; and he grew to manhood, like his father, without a solitary sympathy for

* When he heard that his father had succeeded to the throne of England, he was so delighted that he exclaimed, "I have not one drop of blood in my veins which is not English, and at the service of my father's subjects." The observation was adroitly addressed to an English gentleman, and retailed in England with the customary embellishments, greatly, as may be supposed, to the prince's advantage.

† The princess Caroline Wilhelmina was the daughter of the margrave of Anspach. She was fortunate in receiving her education under the superintendence of Sophia Charlotte, sister of George I., the most learned and elegant woman of her age. From her she imbibed that love of literature, and those sound and elevated principles, by which she was uniformly distinguished. She was possessed of great natural endowments, which her own good sense induced her to cultivate with assiduity. In her youth she was celebrated for her beauty, which afterwards suffered some blemish from the smallpox and a tendency to corpulency. Tickell, in his poem on "Kensington Gardens" apostrophises her charms in language which is said not to have exaggerated them.

"She, towering o'er the rest,
Stands fairest of the fairer kind confest,
Form'd to gain hearts that Brunswick's cause denied,
And charm a people to her father's side."

She completely controlled the irritable temper of her husband without appearing to do so, and "bore her faculties," says Coxe, "so meekly, and with such extraordinary prudence, as never to excite the least uneasiness even in a sovereign so tenacious of his authority, but contrived that her opinion should appear as if it had been his own." She was the steady patroness of the distinguished men of her day, and nearly all the principal appointments in church and state were conferred by her recommendation. Her levees presented a strange intermixture of men of learning, courtiers, poets, divines, and politicians, and the conversation in her court partook of all those mingled characteristics. But she maintained the forms of royal etiquette (perhaps to please her husband) with scrupulous dignity. She would sometimes dine with sir Robert Walpole at Chelsea, but always preserving the strictest forms; sitting down to table with lady Walpole and the royal family, while sir Robert stood behind her chair, gave her the first plate, and then retired to another apartment, where dinner was served for him and the queen's household. See *Coxe's Walpole*, vol. i.

‡ Lord Hervey described his majesty's regularity as a purely mechanical habit. "He seemed," observed that nobleman in a letter to Walpole, "to think his having done a thing to-day, an unanswerable reason for his doing it to-morrow."

literature, science, or art. Phlegmatic and precise, parsimonious and reserved, his natural inaptitude to conciliate the attachment of his friends was rendered still more prominent by an irascible, violent, and unforgiving temper. In person unprepossessing* and cold in manners, his personal and social disadvantages were felicitously counterbalanced by the influence of the beautiful and accomplished princess Caroline of Anspach, to whom he was married in 1705.

It was confidently anticipated on the death of George I., that an extensive change in the administration would take place. Bolingbroke and the tories had caballed at Leicester-house, supported by the private influence of Mrs. Howard, afterwards countess of Suffolk†, the new monarch's mistress. Bolingbroke, who had procured an audience of George I., shortly before he left England, through the intercession of Walpole‡, laid a subtle train for undermining the cabinet; and Pulteney was indefatigable in his efforts to inflame the mind of George II. against his father's advisers, whom he represented as his

* His majesty is said to have had a pleasant expression of face, with prominent eyes, and a Roman nose. But the portraits and medallions convey a very different expression, displaying a countenance remarkable for feebleness of intellect, petty irritability of temper, and impoverishing selfishness and sensuality. His figure was so small as to incur the ridicule of a merry satirist in the well-known ballad on the "Seven Wise Men."

"When Edgecumbe spoke, the prince in sport
Laughed at the merry elf;
Rejoiced to see within his court
One shorter than himself.
I'm glad (cry'd out the quibbling squire)
My *lowness* makes your highness *higher*."

† Mrs. Howard was the daughter of sir Henry Hobart of Norfolk, and married Charles Howard, afterwards earl of Suffolk, whom she accompanied to Hanover, where she was appointed bedchamber woman to the princess Caroline, attending her subsequently to England. She was a woman of very little talent, but of great beauty. The king's *liaison* with her was a mere accident. She was the confidante of his passion for miss Bellenden, and became his mistress when that lady proudly rejected him.

‡ Walpole procured this interview to prove that he was superior to all feelings of jealousy concerning Bolingbroke, who believed, however, that he had made such an impression on his majesty, as led him to regard his death as an irreparable misfortune. "Though," he observed in a letter to sir William Wyndham, "the king durst not support me openly against his ministers, he would have plotted with me against them: — it is, therefore, a satisfaction to me, that I was not wanting to my friends, to my country, and to myself, in a conjuncture, the advantages of which were defeated by nothing but sudden death."

majesty's personal enemies. The confidence of the king was known, also, to be reposed in sir Spencer Compton, who was publicly spoken of as the new minister. Walpole, indeed, was so convinced of the certainty of his removal, that he contemplated resignation. "I shall certainly go out," he said, to sir William Yonge: "but let me recommend you not to go into violent opposition, as we must soon come in again."

The queen, however, had resolved otherwise. She had been a close and silent observer of Walpole's labours, and was capable of appreciating the value of his services. She felt, too, the delicacy with which, even at the risk of office, he declined to pay court to the favourite, Mrs. Howard, and the high respect he always manifested towards herself. Walpole was a profound judge of character. He foresaw that the king would be governed by his wife, and he made his election, which fortunately proved to be a prudent as well as a just one.

When the despatch containing an account of the king's death reached Walpole, he immediately repaired to the palace at Richmond, and presented it to the king, who was at first incredulous. When he had recovered from his surprise, Walpole inquired who his majesty would appoint to draw up the declaration to the privy council. The king abruptly answered "Compton," and the minister withdrew covered with mortification.

The principal merits by which Compton was distinguished were, great assiduity and regularity in the discharge of business, which strongly recommended him to the favour of the king, and a solemn formality of manner, which passed off for profundity. Being ignorant of the mode of framing the requisite declaration, Walpole drew it up at his request, and Compton, flushed with hope, conveyed it to the king. This very circumstance contributed materially to exclude him from the post to which he aspired. The queen urged upon his majesty the imprudence of placing a man at the head of the ministry who could not draw up a declaration to the privy council—pointed out the imminent danger of a

tory cabinet, and especially of recalling Bolingbroke to power—described the difficulties in which the foreign alliances of the country were involved, and dwelt upon the necessity of preserving in office a well-established ministry, who were so familiar with the public affairs, and so competent to manage them. Her good sense prevailed, and the old ministry, with a few slight and unimportant alterations, were re-appointed.*

The only member of the cabinet council displaced by the new arrangement was the earl of Berkley, first lord of the admiralty, who was succeeded by Byng, lord Torrington, a strong adherent of Walpole's. Subordinate offices were filled by a fresh accession of friends; and the strength of the minister was visibly based on stronger foundations than ever it had been before. The opposition was struck with panic. They felt that the re-establishment of Walpole at the head of affairs was fatal to their hopes. They did not hesitate to declare, that his overthrow would be more important to the interests of the chevalier, than the intrigues of Alberoni or the arms of Austria. A fruitless attempt was made, through the interference of Mrs. Howard, to procure an earldom for lord Bathurst; but, failing in that object, they relinquished the contest. Bolingbroke, defeated in every quarter, buried his disgrace in retirement.

Parliament assembled on the 27th June; and, in his speech from the throne, the king declared his approval of all the late measures, and his determination to preserve the constitution in church and state inviolate. The entire produce of the civil list, amounting to about 130,000*l.* more than the 700,000*l.* granted to the late king, was settled on his majesty during life on the mo-

* A curious illustration of the transitory nature of ministerial friendships, and the hollowness and perfidiousness of courtiers' professions, occurred on this occasion. Walpole, returning in his carriage through St. James's Square, after leaving the queen's closet, where he received the assurance of his re-appointment, while it was yet generally believed that his dismissal had actually taken place, saw the door of sir Spencer Compton's house besieged by persons of all ranks, who crowded to pay their court to the new minister. "Did you observe," cried Walpole to a friend who was with him, "how my house is deserted, and how that door is crowded with carriages? To-morrow the scene will be changed; that house will be deserted, and mine will be more frequented than ever."

tion of Walpole. Shippen resisted the grant, charged the government with prodigality, and proposed to reduce the yearly allowance to 700,000*l.* His amendment, however, not finding a seconder, was rejected without a division; and a further sum of 100,000*l.* per annum was settled as a jointure on the queen. On the 17th the parliament was prorogued to August, and soon after dissolved.

1728. The new house of commons, convened in January, was composed of nearly the same materials as the last. Compton, the former speaker, having been elevated to the peerage, Onslow was elected in his place,—a man who, by the dignified and impartial discharge of his duties, during a period of thirty-seven years, fully justified the cordial unanimity with which he was chosen. The speech from the throne communicated the delays that had taken place in the execution of the preliminaries with Spain, and pointed out the absolute necessity of continuing warlike preparations. The address which, as usual, echoed the sentiments of the speech, passed the lords without opposition; but Shippen moved an amendment in the commons, and took occasion to accuse ministers of want of energy and decision. The feelings of the house, however, were so strongly against him that, although his motion was seconded by Wyndham in a violent harangue, he did not venture to submit to a division. But when the question came before parliament in the substantive shape of a motion for a grant to the amount of 230,923*l.* for the maintenance of 12,000 Hessians in the British pay, the opposition, headed by the Pulteneys, put out all their vigour. The popular objections to the employment of mercenaries were argued with consummate art and great ability; but the economy of foreign troops in comparison with the cost of raising national levies, and the pressing necessity of the case, yielded a sufficient excuse to satisfy the consciences of the ministerial majority, which exhibited the formidable array of 280 votes against 84.

It was not found quite so easy, however, to gain over

the house to acquiesce in the propriety of inserting large sums in the public expenditure, which were not specifically accounted for. The alliances and intrigues of George I. had led to an exorbitant outlay in channels which the ministers could not very creditably reveal; and there appeared an item of 250,000*l.* in the national accounts "for preserving and restoring the peace of Europe," which provoked so much clamour, that an address was voted to the king, requesting a specific explanation of its disbursement. His majesty's reply was a calm and decisive refusal to comply with the demand, declaring that a specific account of the disbursements could not be given without prejudice to the public, and hoping that they would place the same confidence in him they had reposed in his father. Pulteney burst into a vehement protest against such a loose and vague mode of accounting for the outlay of the public money, which, he asserted, had a tendency to render parliament insignificant and useless, to cover embezzlements, and screen corrupt and rapacious ministers. But his indignation was of no avail. Walpole declared that it would be impossible to carry on the public service if every shilling that was expended was to be made known to the world; and the house of commons affirmed the doctrine, by passing, before the session terminated, a discretionary vote of credit at the requisition of the court.

The investigation of the sinking fund and the national debt occupied a large share of attention throughout the session, and a select committee was appointed to make a report upon the subject. This was exactly what Walpole desired. The opposition had industriously circulated a variety of calculations and representations, to show that the sinking fund had failed to attain the object originally proposed in its adoption, and that the national debt, instead of being diminished by that expedient, had really been increased. The report, drawn up by Walpole on this occasion, was a master-piece of finance, elaborate, lucid, and minute. He clearly proved, in a form so simple as to be intelligible to the meanest

capacity, that the sinking fund had been raised from 400,000*l.* to 1,200,000*l.*; and that between Christmas 1716 and Lady-day 1728, a sum of no less than 6,648,762*l.* had been applied to the discharge of the national debt. The opposition to this document was violent but feeble. The weight of evidence was wholly on Walpole's side, and the report was carried by a majority of 243 against 77. Great stress continued to be laid on the refusal to account for the money expended in secret service; and Walpole, in the midst of his reply, receiving intelligence from lord Townshend that the preliminaries with Spain were ratified at the Prado*, availed himself of the information, and acquainted the house with the news, observing, that "the nation would be now relieved from the burthen of the late expenses, and that he could assure the members who called so loudly for a specification of the secret service money, that it had been expended in obtaining the conclusion of that peace, the preliminaries of which were now signed." The intelligence diffused universal satisfaction through the house, and gave increased *éclat* to the ministerial victory.

The session terminated on the 28th May, to the undisguised delight of the king, who thanked the commons for the effectual supplies they had voted for the service of the year, and congratulated both houses on the zeal and unanimity with which they had despatched the public business.†

In consequence of the ratification of the preliminaries of peace with Spain, a congress was held at Soissons, where the plenipotentiaries of the various powers were assembled. Nothing material was transacted; but the skilful diplomacy of Fleury gradually produced a friendly understanding between the courts of Versailles and Madrid; while the refusal of the emperor to give an ex-

* A palace near Madrid.

† During this session, the standing order for the exclusion of strangers was so strictly enforced in the house of lords, that no report of their proceedings remains upon record.

plicit reply to the demand respecting the marriages of the two archduchesses to the two infantas of Spain, produced such a feeling of resentment on the part of Philip, as to render him desirous of renewing his former connections with Great Britain. These differences were of the last importance to the interests of England; and as no advance had been made towards obtaining the emperor's sanction of the Hanoverian acquisition, it was considered advisable to draw still more closely the bonds of union with Spain and France.

In the meanwhile, the parliament, which opened on the 21st January, was besieged with petitions from the mercantile interest, complaining of the losses and obstructions inflicted upon trade by the depredations of the Spaniards in the West Indies; and a committee was appointed to investigate the subject. The result of its labours was a resolution justifying the instructions given to admiral Hosier, and another declaring that the Spaniards had violated the treaties subsisting between the two crowns. An address was accordingly presented to his majesty, hoping that he would obtain reasonable satisfaction for these injuries; and another was adopted in the lords, and subsequently agreed to by the commons, expressing entire reliance on his majesty, that he would take effectual care to assert his undoubted right to Gibraltar and Minorca. 1729.

The avidity of the king to procure money, and his obstinacy in adhering to any resolution he had once formed, frequently placed Walpole in circumstances of embarrassment, from which it taxed his utmost powers to extricate himself with credit. Such a dilemma arose during this session upon a motion, made by Scrope, secretary to the treasury, that a sum of 115,000*l.* be granted to his majesty, not as a deficiency on the civil list, for it appeared that there was none, but as an arrear. The bill was passed by the commons, and carried in the face of a protest, and a strenuous resistance in the lords. Walpole had exerted all his influence with his majesty to prevail upon him to abandon the

demand. His reluctance to force such a fraud upon parliament was not unknown to the tories, who made private proposals to the king, that if his majesty would dismiss Walpole they would not only ensure the sum required, but enlarge it by 100,000*l.* Walpole was consequently reduced to the painful alternative of supporting the vote contrary to his judgment, or tendering his resignation. He chose the former course, and was heavily, and not unjustly, charged by his enemies with corrupt motives. In other matters of inferior moment he was exposed to similar vexations by the wilfulness and stubborn temper of the king. He solicited the office of president of the council, for his friend the duke of Devonshire, and was refused; and had the mortification of seeing it bestowed upon lord Carleton, who rarely voted with the whigs. He desired, also, to have Charles Stanhope appointed a lord of the admiralty; but the king, having discovered a paper written by Stanhope, containing a proposal to remove him from the country when he was prince of Wales, declared that no consideration should induce him to assign to Stanhope any place of trust or honour, and expressed some resentment against the minister for recommending him. In this resolution the king was hardly blameable on personal grounds; but, agreeably to the spirit of a limited monarchy, it is impossible for a minister to discharge his responsibility with advantage to the country, or justice to himself, if the sovereign permit private animosities or individual influences to intercept and thwart the counsels of his constitutional advisers.

The proceedings of parliament terminated on the 14th of May, and his majesty, leaving the queen sole regent in his absence, went to Hanover. The unbounded confidence he reposed in her equity, vigilance, and discretion was fully justified by the integrity of her conduct. Da Cunha, Portuguese minister at the Hague, speaking of her government during the occasional absence of the king, says in a letter to Azevedo, "It is certain neither

the king will do anything without the queen, nor the queen without the king; and therefore, in point of dispatch of business, London is Hanover and Hanover is London."

The joint policy of Walpole and Fleury was avowedly pacific; and the recent breach between Spain and the emperor enabled them to act upon it with decision and success. A circumstance which at this crisis occurred to increase the jealousy subsisting between the courts of London and Vienna, assisted very materially, although unexpectedly, to bring about the desired pacification. George I. had been intrusted with the execution of some imperial decrees against the duchy of Mecklenburg, which entailed a considerable expenditure upon him, for the repayment of which he held a mortgage upon the duchy. In this affair the duke of Wolfenbuttel was associated with his majesty. In consequence, however, of certain alleged acts of tyranny and contumacy, the reigning duke of Mecklenburg was deposed by the emperor and the aulic council, and the duke Christian Louis appointed to the administration of the duchy in his place. But George II. refusing to part with the mortgage, which devolved upon him on the death of his father, insisted upon holding the revenues of the duchy in sequestration, and warned duke Christian to be cautious how he accepted the office conferred upon him. The emperor immediately issued an imperial rescript requiring the king of Great Britain to suspend his claims until they could be settled by an amicable adjustment, on the grounds that the course of proceeding he adopted would embarrass the present government of the duchy. But his majesty returned an answer in the negative, and at the same time wrote to the king of Prussia, requiring that prince to concur with him in the maintenance of the rights of the empire. A conference was held at Hanover, in June, between lord Townshend and the count Kinski, the imperial ambassador, but it ended dissatisfactorily on both sides; and in the October following, Townshend declared that "his measures were so arranged as to facilitate any

views his majesty might have upon any part of the country of Mecklenburg." Thus the mutual alienation of the courts of Madrid and London from that of Vienna, gave them a mutual interest in the combination so much desired by Walpole; and through the mediation of Fleury, they entered into a definitive treaty or convention at Seville in the following November, by which peace was completely restored between them, and all former treaties were renewed.

The treaty of Seville consisted of fourteen articles, with two additional articles for the confirmation of former treaties, and the restoration of seizures. The only new feature it contained was a stipulation for the introduction of 6,000 Spaniards, instead of neutral troops, as specified in the quadruple alliance, into Tuscany, Parma, and Placentia, for the purpose of securing to Don Carlos the eventual succession to those duchies, in case the reigning sovereign should die without male issue; and it was further provided that forcible means should be employed for effecting their proposed object, in the contingency of any resistance being offered to it by the emperor. This article gave occasion to an extraordinary clamour amongst the opponents of the government in England. They affected to consider it not only injurious to the national honour, but eminently calculated to produce a general war, instead of laying the foundations of a solid, lasting peace. It was urged that the introduction of Spanish, instead of neutral troops into the Italian duchies, would eventually provoke discontent, and perhaps resistance, on the part of the reigning dukes, and that the emperor's interests were directly compromised by the establishment of garrisons in the neighbourhood of his possessions, who would have, in reference to the future succession, so strong a temptation to meddle in the political and civil affairs of the government. All this was meant to shew that the introduction could not be effected without disturbances which, in the end, would precipitate a war; and it was hoped that the prophecy of such disasters would have some influence in actually

bringing them about. It was also asserted, that as neutral troops might have been amicably admitted, and the Spanish troops would probably be opposed, the deviation from the terms of the quadruple alliance would, in all likelihood, involve the necessity of maintaining seven times the force that would have been otherwise required. Another point insisted upon was, that there was no stipulation in the treaty of Seville (as there was in the quadruple alliance) that the Italian duchies should never be in the possession of any prince who should at the same time be king of Spain; and that, therefore, it admitted the very possible contingency that these dominions might become ultimately united under the crown of Spain. As to Gibraltar and Minorca, it was boldly affirmed that they were not secured to England by this treaty, because no reference whatever was made to them — a circumstance which was regarded on the other side as a tacit renunciation of all claim to them on the part of Spain.*

* The arguments against the treaty, such as they were, will be found at great length in successive numbers of the "Craftsman," which was principally managed by Pulteney and Bolingbroke, especially in the appendix to vol. v. printed in 1730. The pen of Bolingbroke is frequently to be detected in the irony and rage of these papers, the principal merit of which is, that they afford some exquisite specimens of special pleading. Walpole, was the main object of the virulence of these writers. They assailed him in prose and verse, and left no scandal or falsehood unattempted to bring him into popular contempt and odium. They pretended that his parliamentary majorities were against the sense of the nation, and that he sustained himself in office by corrupt votes. This is plainly hinted at in the fag end of an epigram on a debate on the national debt: —

"Yet as it stands now, if the world judge aright,
Another such triumph would demolish him quite;
'Twas but a *drawn battle* at best, without doubt;
One triumphed *within doors*, the other *without*."

In a ballad, called "The Progress of Patriotism," Walpole's seduction of the members is delineated in the story of a country knight, who is no sooner elected into parliament, than the minister seizes upon him, flatters his rustic vanity, asks him to dinner, and gains him over to the court. The satirist admits that no man knew better how to waylay the foibles of others: —

"The statesman (who, we must agree,
Can far into our foibles see,
And knows exactly how to flatter
The weak, blind sides of human nature)
Saw the vain wretch begin to yield,
And further thus his oil instilled."

The obvious answer to all this was, that the tories when they were in power did exactly the same thing; but Walpole incurred their implacable hatred for doing it much more successfully.

1730. All these arguments were strenuously urged against the treaty when it was laid before parliament at the opening of the next session, in January, 1730. The opposition had by this time become powerful and compact, through the management of Bolingbroke, whose connection alike with the tories and the dissentient whigs gave him great influence. Hitherto the coalition had been weak and insincere. The tories, consisting principally of country gentlemen, and amounting in number to no less than 110 members, had been careless in their attendance in parliament, and never entered into a cordial union with the discontented whigs. Bolingbroke bound them together, and formed a regular system for opening an attack upon the administration. The treaty of Seville afforded a plausible ground of accusation; for, although it was evidently advantageous to the commerce of England, it exposed the country to the possibility of a war with Austria, which, however remote, Bolingbroke urged as by no means an improbable contingency. This was the grand point he relied upon for inflaming the passions of the people, and infusing fresh spirit into the opposition. "Will our minister," demanded the Craftsman, "execute the treaty of Seville, or not? If he does execute it, will not he be answerable for the consequences of it, such as increase of debt; new loads of taxes; the accidents of a war, in which even good success may be detrimental to us in the highest degree; a war, purely ministerial, if ever any war was such; neither forced upon us by injuries, nor provoked by insults; neither begun for the sake of the people, nor occasioned by the advice of the people? Will they be easy under the oppressions of such a war; or be pacified when they see the consequences of it more nearly, with being told that the emperor is grown too powerful by our means, and ought to be reduced, as one of our newswriters hath lately told us; or that he is unreasonable in opposing our measures, though taken without his consent or knowledge, and ought to be chastised? Does not our able minister seem to entertain, at last, some of

those apprehensions which seized every body else at first, by the backwardness he hath shown in executing this treaty, notwithstanding the importunity of Spain? and does not this reflect great honour on the judgment of those who opposed him?" * The last sentence refers to Townshend, who was known to be inimical to the treaty, and whose repugnance was not overruled by Walpole without considerable difficulty; a circumstance which subsequently led to serious results, affecting the administration, and which at the time inspired the opposition with the most sanguine hopes of success. The growing disunion in the cabinet could not be concealed. Walpole's policy was entirely pacific, while Townshend clamoured for an open attack upon the emperor. There was reason, also, to believe that while the views of the former were secretly supported by the queen, the king was favourable to the projects of the latter. "Could your majesty," observed Townshend in a letter to the king, "get this plan of operations settled, I am entirely of opinion that this single step would free you from all your present difficulties. I am firmly persuaded that, upon the first news of this plan being fixed, the king of Prussia would submit, and will not wait till the declaration proposed be made to him; and when the emperor shall have lost him, and shall see your majesty and your allies in a condition to make good their engagements, he will think it agreeable to his honour, as well as to his interest, to accept of *any* declaration that shall be made to him in the name of your majesty and your allies." The firm resistance of the Walpoles to these frantic suggestions, led the intemperate Townshend to threaten resignation. But they treated the threat with incredulity. "He is still as active and eager in business as ever," says Horace Walpole; "his violence against keeping any measures at all with the emperor, and his endeavours to make all measures *electoral*, preferable to all other considerations, *which is entirely agreeable to the king's sentiments*, make some think that his lordship has no

* Craftsman, vol. vii. p. 223, 224.

thoughts of resigning. But," he adds, "I am of opinion, that when the parliament is up, *if any thing should happen contrary to his desire*, he may offer to quit, as he has already done to the king, and will be taken at his word; and will, some way or other, *jostle* himself out of place." The Walpoles felt that Townshend's influence with the king arose wholly from his predilections in favour of Hanover, and they set themselves vigorously about counteracting his designs. "Let us have strong assurances," observes Robert Walpole, "about Hanover, and we shall be able to defy him, and all he can do."

The opposition availed themselves promptly of all the advantages they could reap from this state of affairs. They made a violent stand against the treaty, and their arguments acquired additional force from the indignation exhibited by the emperor, who filled Europe with rescripts against the injustice and perfidy of England; and, by a distinct edict, prohibited the subjects of Great Britain from trading in his dominions, making at the same time extensive military preparations, apparently for the purpose of asserting his rights by an appeal to arms.

The first open trial of strength between the two parties was upon a bill for preventing loans to foreign powers, without license first obtained from his majesty under his privy seal. This bill was occasioned by an attempt of the emperor, deprived of remittances from Spain by the treaty of Seville, to borrow 400,000*l.* in London. The ministry were clearly justified in the principle of this measure. It was contended, however, on the other side, that the bill would render Holland the money mart of the Continent; that the licensing power was liable to abuse; that the clause which empowered the attorney-general to compel the discovery on oath of such loans would convert the court of exchequer into a court of inquisition, and that the English people would thus be disabled from assisting their best allies. But it was urged in reply, that the object of the bill was merely to prevent the subjects of the state from assisting the enemies of the state; and the loan then in course of

negotiation for the emperor was especially pointed out as an illustration. The minister succeeded; the bill was carried; and its justification was the fact, that the want of money compelled the court of Vienna to submit to terms of accommodation.*

The motion for continuing the Hessian and Wolfenbuttel subsidies exhibited the whole power of an opposition now beginning, for the first time, to be conscious of the importance of unanimity. They asserted that the maintenance of foreign mercenaries could have no other object than some sinister design upon the constitution. The minister repelled the insinuation with contempt, and although he carried the vote by a majority of 71, it was against a powerful minority of 169.

Feeling their power to harass, if not to overthrow the ministry, the opposition now brought forward a bill for disabling persons from sitting in parliament who enjoyed pensions from the crown, or for whom offices were held in trust, directly or indirectly. But Walpole, aware of the popularity of this measure, and resolved not to commit himself by resisting it openly, suffered it to pass the commons without opposition, previously concerting with his colleagues that it should be thrown out of the lords on the second reading. The king, in a letter to Townshend, declared his abhorrence of it. "As to this villanous bill," said his majesty, "I have seen a great many lords who are all zealously against it, in every part of it. I don't doubt but you will tear it to pieces in every particular, not only in relation to the gratuities, but also to oaths and pensions, knowing very well, that if all the different clauses of it are abused and run down, the commons wont attempt it another time; and the sooner it is thrown out the better." † His majesty, however, was mistaken in this anticipation; for, although the bill was rejected by the lords, as had been previously arranged, Sandys brought it forward in the ensuing session, and, failing again in his object, he moved for a

* Coxe's Walpole.
† Correspondence with Townshend.

committee to inquire whether any members enjoyed pensions or offices from the crown, or held in trust for them. Walpole upon this occasion ventured to speak, describing the functions of such a committee as involving a power unknown to the constitution, and calculated, in practical application, to deprive half the counties and boroughs in England of their representatives. He drew after him a sufficient majority to defeat the proposal, but many supporters of the government, afraid of offending their constituents, voted against him.

The next subject to which the opposition directed their attack, was the failure on the part of the French to destroy the harbour of Dunkirk, agreeably to the stipulations made at the peace of Utrecht. The French were too deeply impressed with the value of the harbour, in the event of a war with Great Britain, to demolish it, so long as they were permitted to keep it in repair. The English government had frequently remonstrated in vain. Fleury promised fairly, but clandestinely connived at the preservation of the works, afraid probably of irritating the people by carrying so unpopular a measure into effect. Bolingbroke discovered in these proceedings a fertile source of mischief, and sending his secretary to inspect the harbour, an address to the king was founded upon his report, in which his majesty was requested to direct all documents connected with the harbour of Dunkirk to be laid before the house. Having obtained the necessary papers, sir William Wyndham moved, that what had been done in the affair was a violation of the treaties between the two countries. The object of this motion was obviously to produce a breach with France, and to excite discontent at home; but it was totally frustrated by a motion for an address of thanks to his majesty for causing proper applications to be made to the court of Versailles, not only for putting a stop to the works going forward, but for demolishing such as had been made by the inhabitants of Dunkirk. This unexpected proceeding took the opposition by surprise, and Walpole

turned the tide of opinion adroitly against them, by showing that it was not a national but a tory question, and, giving the debate a personal application, he broke out into a bold attack upon Bolingbroke. Wyndham defended his friend with energy, which called up Pelham, who replied with such eloquence, as to create, says Horace Walpole, "an universal spirit, flame, and resentment against Bolingbroke in the whole house; so that upon the division, the whigs were 270 against 149. In my opinion," adds the writer, "it was the greatest day, with respect to the thing itself, and the consequences of it both at home and abroad, for his majesty and the present ministry, that I ever knew."* The popularity of the administration received an extraordinary impulse from this debate, and Bolingbroke was left to defend his character, with his usual ingenuity and vehemence, in the periodicals of the day.†

An attempt was now made to raise a factious resistance to the renewal of the East India Company's charter.

* Horace Walpole to lord Harrington.

† Bolingbroke defended himself in the "Craftsman," in which work he had made frequent attempts to inflame the public mind on the subject of Dunkirk. He said that his slanderers had taken an ungenerous and mean advantage of his singular situation, and that they who would have declined a contest with him while he was in a condition to answer for himself, did not blush to declaim against him in another condition. To the charges brought against him he replied in detail, and then denied that he owed any favours to Walpole. Upon this point his language is explicit: "He [Bolingbroke] acknowledges, with the deepest sense of gratitude possible, the clemency and goodness of his late majesty; but sure he hath reason, if ever man had reason, to disclaim all obligation to the minister. The mercy of the late king was extended to him unasked and unearned. What followed many years afterwards, in part of his majesty's gracious intentions, was due solely to the king. That they were not fulfilled, was due solely to the minister. His ambition, his causeless jealousy, and private interest, continued a sort of proscription with much cruelty to the person concerned, and little regard to the declarations which his royal master had been pleased so frequently to make." It is worthy of note, that in this paper, Bolingbroke admits that he had been engaged in the cause of the pretender, and denies that he had acted unfaithfully to him. He grounds his defence of having originally joined him, upon the harshness with which he was treated. "He never entered into these engagements, or any commerce with him [the pretender] till he had been attainted, and cut off from the body of his majesty's subjects. He never had any commerce, either direct or indirect, which was inconsistent with these engagements, whilst he continued in them; and since he was out of them he hath had no commerce, either direct or indirect, in favour of that cause."—*Craftsman*, vol. vii. The political morality of this defence is not of a very high order, since it avows nothing more than that Bolingbroke was true to a cause only so long as he was engaged in it.

A petition was got up from a numerous body of merchants and traders, offering to redeem the fund or capital stock of the company, amounting to 3,200,000*l.*, in five different payments, and instead of preserving a joint stock, or corporate capacity, to throw open the trade by licenses to be granted on certain conditions. The popularity of such a proposal, striking at the roots of a great monopoly, which, from its exclusive character, was naturally regarded with commercial jealousy, might have carried it successfully through parliament, but for the skill and address of the minister, who, insinuating that a part of his ways and means would be derived from the East India Company, disconcerted the whole scheme. The petition was rejected by a majority of 223 against 138, and the charter was renewed and prolonged to 1766, on condition of the payment of 200,000*l.* by way of fine into the exchequer, and the reduction to 4 per cent. of the interest on money advanced to the public.

Walpole further developed his comprehensive plans for the improvement of the revenue and trade of the country, by an act allowing rice to be carried from Carolina directly to any part of Europe south of Cape Finisterre, in British bottoms navigated by British sailors. The same privilege was afterwards extended to the colony of Georgia, and its effects, in both instances, were found to be highly beneficial. The suppression of the duties on salt was not equally sagacious. That impost had produced a large income without being felt in the collection, and its abolition neither effected any sensible relief, nor excited any emotion of gratitude.

The labours of the session terminated on the 15th of May, when the king delivered a speech chiefly remarkable for an ill-judged reference to the political writings of the day, which had latterly assumed an unusually bold and audacious tone. Their authors were described as "incendiaries, who, from a spirit of envy and discontent, continually labour, by scandalous libels, to alienate the affections of my people, and to fill their

minds with groundless jealousies and unjust complaints, in dishonour of me and my government, and defiance of the sense of both houses of parliament." The principal offenders alluded to were Pulteney and Bolingbroke. This was the first time that political controversies — the right of all free men — were ever denounced from the throne; and the spirit in which the reproof was conveyed was quite as discreditable to the whigs as the fact itself.*

On the same day that the house was prorogued, Townshend resigned; and several changes took place in the administration, the immediate effect of which was to increase the influence of the Walpoles. Colonel Stanhope, who had been raised to the peerage, with the title of earl of Harrington, for the services he rendered in effecting the treaty of Seville, was made secretary of state; Henry Pelham, secretary at war; and the earl of Wilmington, privy seal.

The cause of Townshend's resignation may be traced to difference of policy, and difference of temper, between him and Walpole. He was impetuous and overbearing; Walpole pliant and conciliatory. Townshend advocated violent measures — Walpole laboured incessantly to bring about a general peace. These political disagreements led to personal and private jealousies, which ended in a quarrel unworthy of both. Townshend, chagrined at the influence of Walpole, endeavoured, by secretly ingratiating himself with the king, to remove

* The "Craftsman" took ample revenge upon the ministers in an article written with consummate talent, delicacy, and ingenuity. "As kings," says the writer, "are the fountains of honour, they ought likewise to be the fountains of truth, and not suffer it upon any occasion to be polluted with any thing that is false or fallacious. Let the necessities or exigencies of their affairs be never so pressing, they should not endeavour to retrieve by imposing falsehoods on the public. . . . . They should leave that part to their ministers, who are commonly ready enough upon these occasions, and always keep their own personal characters clear from any imputations of this kind. . . . . Another thing highly requisite in the conduct of sovereign princes, in order to render their persons popular and their reigns happy, is courteous language and deportment. The epithet *most gracious* is always bestowed upon our British monarchs, and ought always to be preserved in the public communications of their sentiments to the people. It can never be the interest of any prince to seem *angry*, whatever provocations he may receive. *Hard words* will rather exasperate than soften those who are already dissatisfied."— *Craftsman*, vol. v.

the duke of Newcastle, who was individually obnoxious to his majesty, and, with the help of lord Chesterfield, to form a new administration. The vigilance of Walpole detected the plot; and he concerted with the queen the means of averting it. After a conference with her majesty, he chanced to meet Townshend at colonel Selwyn's, in Cleveland Court, in the presence of the duke of Newcastle, Mr. Pelham, and colonel and Mrs. Selwyn. The conversation turned on a certain negotiation which Walpole had relinquished. Townshend required that the fact should be stated to the commons: Walpole objected to such a proceeding, as being inexpedient and unnecessary. Townshend then said, "Since you object, and the house of commons is your concern more than mine, I shall not persist in my opinion; but, as I now give way, I cannot avoid observing that, upon my honour, I think that mode of proceeding would have been most advisable." Walpole, inflamed at these remarks, passionately replied, "My lord, for once, there is no man's sincerity which I doubt so much as your lordship's; and I never doubted it so much as when you are pleased to make such strong professions." This was too much for the choleric Townshend, who seized Walpole on the instant by the collar; then, separating, they mutually laid their hands upon their swords, and were parted with difficulty.* The breach thus made between them never was healed. Townshend plotted to the end of the session; but, defeated at all points, went into retirement, where he passed his life in rural occupations. Notwithstanding the faults of his temper, and the dangerous ambition by which he was influenced, no man enjoyed a higher character for integrity and generosity. Even Walpole never attempted to depreciate his abilities or his honesty; and always endeavoured to avoid entering upon the causes of their disunion. Several years afterwards, being pressed for an explanation on that subject, he observed, "It is difficult to trace the causes of a dispute between statesmen; but I will give

* Coxe's Walpole.

you the history of it in a few words,— so long as the firm of the house was Townshend and Walpole, the utmost harmony prevailed; but it no sooner became Walpole and Townshend, than things went wrong, and a separation ensued."

The foreign affairs of the kingdom — becoming every day more critical — now devolved ostensibly on the duke of Newcastle and lord Harrington. These noblemen were wholly dissimilar in character, yet they exhibited that perfect harmony in action which is sometimes produced by a union of the most opposite qualities. The duke of Newcastle was a man of trifling manners, hasty in the despatch of business, deficient in arrangement, quick in comprehension, and prompt in debate. Lord Harrington, on the other hand, was remarkably methodical, of an even and steady temper, solemn in deportment, assiduous in the discharge of his duties, and punctilious in the fulfilment of all his engagements. The king entertained a strong antipathy to the former, chiefly on account of his deficiency in order and exactness, which he considered essential qualities in a minister; but he yielded to the representations of Walpole, who pointed out the necessity of conciliating a peer so powerful from his family and connections. Lord Harrington was unquestionably an abler minister. His knowledge of foreign affairs, and his strict attention to diplomatic forms, rendered him a valuable accession to the administration; while the indecision and confusion of his colleague frequently exposed the councils of government to the sneers and assaults of the opposition.

The motives which had hitherto rendered the union with France so important no longer existed in the same force. The solid establishment of the house of Hanover, and the gradual submission of the Jacobite party, had considerably diminished the danger of domestic insurrection, and reduced the alarm which was originally entertained as to the co-operation of France in favour of the pretender. In addition to this, the recent reconciliation of Spain and France had insensibly rekindled

the ancient jealousy between the latter country and England.

The policy of Great Britain was threefold in reference to France, Spain, and Austria; the lines of interest intersecting each other, and complicating the operations of the several diplomatic agents. The first point was to keep out the pretender, and for this purpose it was necessary to preserve the friendship of France; the next was, to preserve the trade with Spain, to which end the treaty of Seville had been entered into; and the third, paramount all throughout in the desires of the king, was to preserve Bremen and Verdun to Hanover, which rendered it imperative to conciliate Austria. But as all these objects could not be prosecuted at the same time, the most urgent were taken into consideration first; and now that the pretender was no longer formidable, and Spain was secured by treaty, the minister resolved to direct his exclusive attention to a negotiation with the court of Vienna.

In arriving at this conclusion sir Robert Walpole differed widely from his brother, who, resident in Paris, and intimately acquainted with the feelings of the French cabinet, was influenced by local and circumscribed views. The retirement of Townshend, the avowed enemy of the Austrian alliance, excited strange speculations in France. "They will not be persuaded," observes Horace Walpole in a private despatch to his brother, "but that the removal of lord Townshend, and the disposition of places, have arisen from secret springs and motives; and apprehend that there is something at bottom that affects the present measures and system of affairs." France was evidently afraid to take any step against the emperor, lest she should be abandoned by England. This apprehension led to an indecision that seriously impeded the plans of the English minister.

When the emperor declared that if Spanish troops were sent into Tuscany, agreeably to the stipulations of the treaty of Seville, he would drive them out, the allies were bound to compel him either to adopt the treaty by

force, or to prevail over his objections by agreeing to the pragmatic sanction, the special condition of his acquiescence. France, really desirous of embracing the former course, affected willingness to adopt either, and secretly threw impediments in the way of both. England, anxious upon any terms to divert the war from the Low Countries, wished to confine hostilities to Sicily or Italy; while France wished to extend it into the Austrian dominions, in the hope of making conquests in that direction. England was ready to agree to the pragmatic sanction to secure the friendship of Austria; France, willing enough to effect a peace, was prepared to make any sacrifice rather than to guarantee the succession of the house of Austria. In the meanwhile the execution of the treaty of Seville was delayed indefinitely; and Spain loudly complained that she had not obtained possession of Parma and Tuscany, for the acquisition of which she had acceded to the quadruple alliance.

Walpole's comprehensive genius enabled him successfully to embrace all these conflicting interests, and to vanquish the contending difficulties by which they were beset. He saw that it was hopeless, as well as unnecessary, to attempt the maintenance of a very strict friendship with France, and that the true aim of British policy in this conjuncture was to preserve the commercial connection with Spain, and at the same time to protect Hanover by an alliance with Austria. He combined these objects, apparently dissimilar, by signifying his willingness to guarantee the pragmatic sanction, which he hoped would induce the emperor to accede to the treaty of Seville.

In his correspondence with his brother Horace on these subjects he developed his project with such cogency and perspicuity, that he overruled all his objections, and by degrees led him to approve of the propriety of opening a negotiation with the court of Vienna. The path was fortunately cleared by a hint thrown out to the English ambassador by the emperor that a reconciliation might easily be effected. The avidity of the En-

glish cabinet to cultivate this disposition was explicitly exhibited in an official despatch from lord Harrington to Mr. Robinson, the resident at Vienna. "His majesty having just grounds," observes the minister, "to apprehend that the object of France is either to keep matters in the same intolerable state of uncertainty and suspense which they are now in, or else, not content with the bare execution of the treaty of Seville, to engage the allies in such a general war as must inevitably overturn the balance of Europe, has been induced to hearken to and encourage any proposal conducive to the preservation of the public tranquillity, even at the price of entering into such new engagement as, though not contrary to his treaties with any of his allies, would inevitably not only be highly disagreeable to France and Spain, but even lose his majesty the confidence and friendship of most of the powerful princes in Germany —*the guarantee of the pragmatic sanction.*" In consideration of this acquiescence in the demands of the house of Austria, Mr. Robinson was instructed to require that the emperor should agree to the arrangements of the treaty of Seville, and concur in such measures as would secure to his majesty the quiet enjoyment of his possessions in Germany. With a view to the fuller enunciation of the latter desire, M. Dieden was commissioned from Hanover to repair to Vienna, and, associated with Mr. Robinson, to lay before the imperial ministers his Britannic majesty's demands.

While the negotiations were in progress, the king of Spain, irritated by this further postponement, declared that he considered himself free from all engagements contracted on his part by the treaty of Seville, and at full liberty to adopt any measures he thought necessary for his own security. Such was the entangled state of affairs when the parliament opened, on the 21st January, 1731.

1731. The king's speech indicated the embarrassments which interrupted the establishment of peace, and the danger that existed of a general rupture, declaring that every

available effort should be made to avert war; but that if unavoidable, recourse should be had to those steps that were necessary to the maintenance of the national honour. "The time draws near," was the emphatic language of his majesty, "which will admit of no further delays. If the tranquillity of Europe can be settled without the effusion of blood, or the expense of public treasure, that situation will certainly be most happy and desirable; but if that blessing cannot be obtained, honour, justice, and the sacred faith due to solemn treaties, will call upon us to exert ourselves in procuring by force what cannot be had upon just and reasonable terms."

If this speech had been prudently confined within general terms, the supplies demanded by the king might not have excited any particular animadversion, since the opposition, ignorant of the negotiations then going forward at Vienna, and which were kept a profound secret, would have been thus deprived of a special ground of objection; but the minister, doubtful of the issue of his plans, was anxious to secure beforehand the sanction of parliament for the expenditure that might become necessary in the event of failure. It was consequently necessary to prepare the house for the probabilities of a war; and the only pretext upon which such an argument could be sustained was the obligation of executing the treaty of Seville. His majesty stated this contingency in the following terms:—"The plan of operations for the execution of the treaty of Seville by force, *in case we shall be driven to that necessity*, is now under consideration; and until the proportions of the confederate forces, and the proper dispositions for employing them, shall be finally adjusted and agreed upon, it will not be easy to determine how far the expenses necessary for the service of the ensuing year may or may not exceed the provisions made for the service of the last year." It was thus made to appear that ministers were about to make war upon Austria; and, in the absence of any explanation of the secret views of the cabinet, the opposition denounced the design as a fresh illustration of the

Hanoverian intrigues that governed the councils of England. The specific character of the address moved in answer to the speech was strongly objected to. It was urged that, according to the ancient usage of parliament, all addresses were general; that our ancestors never declared their sense of things until the particulars were before them; that the making of an address in terms so particular looked like an immediate determination of all the points likely to come before them, which was in effect bringing the business of the whole session into the resolves of one day; that the promising to support his majesty in all his engagements, without knowing what those engagements were, seemed to be determining that they would support him before any reason could be offered for such a determination; that joining France, and attacking the emperor in Flanders or upon the Rhine [which, in truth, was the very last thing ministers desired to do], would naturally throw Flanders, and perhaps a part of Germany, into the hands of the French, by which that monarchy would again become terrible to Europe; and that such a war could tend to nothing but the ruin of that balance of power, which with difficulty we had established after a ten years' bloody and expensive war. These numerous and reasonable objections were embodied in an amendment to the effect that the king should be requested not to concur in a war against the emperor, either in Flanders or upon the Rhine. This proposition, however, was negatived; and the opposition, resolved to testify their dissent, although they despaired of carrying their motion, proposed to insert in the address that they would support his majesty's engagements, *so far as they related to the interest of Great Britain.* This was the vulnerable side of the subject; but it was adroitly defended by Walpole, who said that "such an expression would seem to insinuate that his majesty had entered into engagements that did not relate to the interests of Great Britain, which would be the greatest ingratitude that could be imagined against his majesty, who in all his measures had never showed the least regard to any

thing but the interests of Great Britain, and the ease and security of the people thereof, as all those who had the honour to serve him could testify, &c.; and that, therefore, it was quite unnecessary to confine the words of their address to such engagements as related to the interest of Great Britain." It assuredly required some effrontery on the part of the minister to deliver this cool reply to the assertions of such men as Pulteney, Shippen, and Wyndham, upon matters of fact that were not only notorious to every cabinet in Europe, but that had been publicly commented upon with contemptuous severity by the czar of Russia. But Walpole was playing a subtle game, and was compelled, for the purpose of averting a Hanoverian war, to submit for the present to the imputation of seeming to commit the country to that unpopular extremity. He effectually succeeded in his object. The address was unanimously carried without even a verbal amendment*; and the intelligence infused fresh vigour into the diplomatic movements at Vienna.

The progress, however, of the negotiation was seriously interrupted, and at one moment nearly broken off, by the pertinacious demands of M. Dieden, the Hanoverian minister. Mr. Robinson had been expressly ordered to receive that gentleman with the utmost confidence, to take his information from him as to the king's electoral concerns, to support his arguments, and obtain satisfaction of his demands. The discretion, consequently, of the English ambassador, was thwarted by the Hanoverian agent; and when the plan of a draft or treaty between England and the emperor was submitted to the consideration of the imperial ministers, they cordially assented, with very slight exceptions, to the whole, objecting only to the declarations to be given to his majesty's demands as elector.

The difficulties in which Mr. Robinson was thus placed appeared to be inextricable. His official orders were peremptory as to insisting upon full satisfaction for all the objects in dispute between Hanover and the em-

* Parl. Hist. vol. viii. 834-8.

peror, without which he was not to sign the treaty; and those objects were so various, so complicated, and so delicate, that the hope of bringing them to issue was too remote to be calculated upon. Count Zinzendorf declared that "the emperor would not sign the declaration, though 100,000 men were at the gates of Vienna;" adding, "what would the nations and all Europe say, if for the particular affairs of the elector of Hanover all Christendom should be plunged in a war?" From this observation it may be gathered that the distinction between the interests of England and of Hanover, the king and the elector, were thoroughly understood at Vienna, and that in treating about the concerns of the latter no apprehension was entertained that they would be enforced by the former, at least with the consent of the people, to whom all these protests were artfully addressed. As the dilemma increased, the emperor took a still more decided position; and at last, in a paper which purported to be final, he expressed his "astonishment that the minister of Great Britain should, for the sake of very unreasonable demands made by his master as elector of Hanover—demands as injurious to the dignity of the chief of the empire as contrary to its constitution,—refuse to put the last hand to a treaty, which was so far advanced, for the public good and the tranquillity of Europe."

The administration at home now began to discover the error that had been committed in suffering a negotiation upon which the peace of Europe depended to turn upon so petty an axis. But they could not openly recede without embroiling themselves with the king; and, taking particular care not to sanction any deviation from their former instructions, they transmitted a despatch to Mr. Robinson, which ingeniously allowed him room enough to escape, upon his own responsibility, from the predicament in which he was placed. This despatch informed him that matters must forthwith be brought to a conclusion one way or another; that the secret of the negotiation was already known in France

and Spain; and concluded by recommending him, in the strongest manner, to procure *at the same time* all possible satisfaction to M. Dieden. Such was the substance of the public despatch, sufficiently ambiguous to darken the councils of a minister already perplexed to distraction; but it was accompanied by a private letter from lord Harrington, in which the minister observed, that "it is heartily wished the emperor could be induced to give entire satisfaction upon all the points M. Dieden is charged to negotiate; *but*, when every thing is obtained that is possible to be got, you will, I am persuaded, *according to your instructions*, sign the treaty, insisting, at the same time, *that all that cannot be adjusted be finally settled afterwards by an amicable negotiation.*" This letter threw a little more light upon the wishes of the ministry, which were rendered still clearer by a private postscript from Tilson, under secretary to lord Harrington, to the following effect:—"I hope you will sign, *as I take it you are authorised to do;* and if our plan is agreed upon in the main, I do not see how you can decline putting the last hand to it on your part, for all or any *collateral* difficulties, if there are not any essential ones." The management of this troublesome negotiation reveals at every step the paltry expedients to which the ministers were reduced in their attempt to reconcile their duty to the country with their desire to gratify the Hanoverian predilections of the king.

Robinson fortunately availed himself of the implied sanction of the minister, and signed the treaty on the 16th of March, leaving the declaration to its fate; but the emperor, having gained the point of honour, which seems to have been the whole object for which he was contending, voluntarily affixed his signature to that document in a few days, making only such slight alterations in it that even M. Dieden could hardly credit the unexpected success of his negotiation. The anxieties attendant upon these protracted proceedings are thus alluded to by Mr. Robinson in a communication addressed to lord Harrington:—"I will not pretend to excuse the manner in which

things have been done; but one thing I am sure of, that, right or not, nothing could have been done in any other manner whatever. My lord, I would not pass another month as I have done this last for a kingdom, nor all the kingdoms guaranteed to the emperor; and yet, God knows, till I have the honour to hear from your lordship, I have at least as bitter a month to come." He was rewarded by a complimentary despatch, in which he was gravely informed that the king and all his servants thought it impossible for an angel from heaven to have acted better.

The treaty, however, was well worth all the trouble it cost. It restored tranquillity to Europe; and if it did not wholly satisfy all the parties concerned, it allayed their animosities, and removed all present grounds of quarrel. The mutual specifications were equitable and precise. England guaranteed the emperor's succession, according to the pragmatic sanction; and the emperor guaranteed the abolition of the Ostend Company, and the succession of Don Carlos to Parma and Tuscany. Agreeably to this treaty — which is designated the second treaty of Vienna, to distinguish it from that of 1725 — the convention of Seville, although not formally recognised by the emperor, was virtually secured in one of its most important clauses, the introduction of Spanish troops into Italy, to which the emperor consented. The only points that excited offence were, the condition that no marriages should take place between the archduchesses and the younger sons of his catholic majesty, and the assent of Great Britain to the pragmatic sanction. Spain was mortified by the former, and France by the latter; but these circumstances served to increase the popularity of the measure in England, by depriving the tories of one of those specious topics of abuse upon which their declamation had been employed throughout the previous year. They could no longer accuse the government of favouring the ascendency of France, and sacrificing the friendship of Austria; for it soon became manifest that ministers had really acted upon the very opposite policy.

The effect of this treaty was almost magical. It completely disarmed the opposition, falsified their insidious predictions, and forcing all the positions they had taken up, compelled them to adopt an entirely new line of argument. Unable to assail the wisdom of these arrangements, they attacked the mode in which they were carried out. While they acknowledged the prudence which accomplished such pacific results, they asserted that England was entangled in a net of treaties, conventions, and alliances, which so effectually bound her up with foreign powers that it was hardly possible for any rupture to take place in Europe without involving her as a principal. They maintained that it was the interest of England to maintain her insular situation, to keep clear of all external contracts and engagements, and to trust for self-defence to her naval strength and the neutrality of her political bearing. The answer to this shallow reasoning was a simple negative. Of all countries in the world, England was the last that could exist without alliances and treaties. Her maritime character, her colonial possessions, her extensive and increasing trade that brought her into direct connection with a great variety of different and incompatible interests, and the constant necessity which her limited surface created for the formation of supplemental settlements, rendered it not only desirable but unavoidable to enter into numerous contracts with other powers, modified from time to time by the fluctuating influences of altered circumstances, and assuming an offensive or defensive tone as those circumstances demanded.

The session of parliament—distinguished principally by a law enacting that all legal processes and pleadings should be entered in the English language, in order to prevent the delays of justice occasioned by the use of Latin*—was closed by the announcement from the

* This very salutary measure was resisted, on the ground of the danger that would be incurred by meddling with the *established* forms of judicial proceedings. The fear of innovation was never displayed in a more ridiculous light. To preserve forms merely because they are *established*, without any reference to utility, justice, or necessity—to petrify the customs of

throne, on the 7th May, of the ratifications exchanged between the king and the emperor, which diffused universal satisfaction amongst all parties. Thus terminated a dangerous contest that had, for a space of ten years, divorced England from her ancient ally, Austria; a contest that originated in the connection with Hanover, that was carried on solely for the protection of the interests of the electorate, but that was happily closed by an arrangement alike honourable and advantageous to Great Britain.

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antiquity, and send them down as unalterable models to the remotest posterity,—and to set up a perpetual barrier against the improvements suggested and enforced by the advance of intelligence, of numbers, and of the complex power of the state, constituted the peculiar province of that close and inflexible minority, which, with variable success, has from that time to the present exercised extraordinary influence in the English legislature.

CHAP. VIII.

1731—1733.

POPULARITY OF WALPOLE. — ANGRY CONTROVERSIES IN THE RECESS. — CHARACTER OF PULTENEY. — QUARREL AND DUEL WITH LORD HERVEY. — NEW PARLIAMENTARY TACTICS OF THE OPPOSITION. — DEBATE ON THE STANDING ARMY. — WALPOLE REVIVES THE DUTY ON SALT, AND DIMINISHES THE LAND TAX. — GROUNDS OF THAT MEASURE. — APPREHENSIONS OF A GENERAL EXCISE. — POPULAR PREJUDICES ON THAT SUBJECT. — ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF THE EXCISE. — RESISTANCE TO THE ADDRESS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. — AMENDMENTS CARRIED, WITH THE ACQUIESCENCE OF MINISTERS. — DEBATE ON THE ARMY ESTIMATES RENEWED. — SPANISH DEPREDATIONS ON ENGLISH TRADE. — BILL FOR SECURING THE TRADE OF THE SUGAR COLONIES. — FIRST TAX IMPOSED ON AMERICA. — WALPOLE ALIENATES A PART OF THE SINKING FUND FOR THE CURRENT EXPENSES OF THE STATE. — FLAGRANT INJUSTICE OF THE PROCEEDING. — REASONS FOR ITS POPULARITY. — AGITATION CREATED BY WALPOLE'S SCHEME OF REVENUE REFORM. — STRENUOUS EFFORTS OF THE OPPOSITION TO DEFEAT IT. — CLAMOUR OUT OF DOORS. — INTRODUCTION OF THE EXCISE BILL. — ITS NATURE AND UTILITY EXPLAINED. — THE FALSE AND SUPERFICIAL DOCTRINES OF THE OPPOSITION. — THE BILL IS CARRIED. — TURBULENT DEMONSTRATIONS OF UNIVERSAL DISCONTENT. — WALPOLE ABANDONS THE MEASURE. — DISMISSAL OF SIX PEERS. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION.

WALPOLE was now in the zenith of his reputation. The tranquillising effects of the treaty of Vienna became every day more apparent. Even the French minister gradually abated his political objections to it; because, although he resented the acquiescence of the king of England in the pragmatic sanction, he felt that it relieved him personally of much embarrassment, and facilitated the promotion of those pacific views which were

so congenial to his temper and his policy. The dissatisfaction of Spain sunk into a murmur, which soon ceased to agitate her cabinet; for it was now generally known that, even had no such stipulation entered into the treaty, the house of Austria never intended to execute the marriages between the archduchesses and the Spanish princes.* The appearance in London, in the autumn of the present year, of the duke of Lorraine, elected by his imperial majesty as the future consort of the archduchess Maria Theresa, set that question finally at rest.

The opponents of the government having now no substantial cause of complaint, resorted to abuse; and the recess was occupied with a fierce paper controversy, which, in the want of more tangible materials, rapidly degenerated into virulent personality.† Informations were filed against Franklin, the bookseller, for certain papers in the "Craftsman" reflecting on the conduct of ministers‡; and Pulteney, on account of his connection with that publication, was forced into a conspicuous position in the front of the conflict.§

Pulteney was favourably circumstanced by birth, fortune, and talents, to sustain that lead in the house of commons to which he was unanimously called by the opposition. He had entered the house early in life, and distinguished himself as a warm and able partisan against the ministry of queen Anne. His eloquence was remark-

* In the latter end of March, 1731, Mr. Robinson informed lord Harrington that "it had been owned to him that the marriage was never intended, if it could possibly be avoided; and, at present, the thing was not so much as thought of."

† Tindal.

‡ The papers referred to chiefly related to foreign affairs, and exhibited considerable skill in the treatment of the subject, as well as implacable enmity to Walpole. Franklin had been "taken up," to use his own words, before; but, upon offering to discover the author of the offensive article, he was liberated without further inquiry. For the last libels, however, he was brought to trial; and a vast crowd of spectators, including a number of noblemen and members of the commons, such as lord Winchelsea, lord Bathurst, sir William Wyndham, sir William Yonge, Pulteney, &c., gathered about the avenues of the court. When the jury came to be called, of the twenty-four who were summoned only eleven appeared; and after some discussion, the trial was postponed to the ensuing term.—See *Political State.*

§ The liberty of the press was apostrophised in the person of Pulteney, who, it was remarked, upon leaving Westminster Hall, on the day appointed for Franklin's trial, was loudly cheered by the populace.

able no less for originality and freshness, than for wit and variety; and as he was well acquainted with the constitution of the country and the details of government, he could apply his bitter satire or his mocking humour with the certainty of striking the most vulnerable points.* As a writer he excelled in almost every form of composition, and acquired as much celebrity by the stinging ridicule of metrical pasquinades, epigrams, and ballads, as by the force and subtlety of his political pamphlets. He enjoyed amongst his friends a character for good nature and generosity which was denied to him by his enemies, who asserted that he was secretly the slave of the meanest passions; personal ambition and avarice, and that he was subject to ebullitions of temper which would have been contemptible but for the unquestionable courage with which they were associated. †

Pulteney appears to have addressed himself with singular success to the foreign policy of the country, and to have made such an impression abroad, as to be greatly courted by those foreign ministers who were displeased with the measures of the British cabinet, especially Palm, the imperial ambassador, who caballed with the opposition, and endeavoured to overturn the ministry. ‡ The "Craftsman" was filled with invectives againt Walpole and his friends, and displayed so much knowledge of continental politics that its principal articles were attributed to the pen or the suggestions of Pulteney. It was accordingly assailed in a violent pamphlet called "Sedition and Defamation displayed," in which Pulteney was personally attacked, and his resentment against

* "He was a most complete orator and debater in the house of commons," observes lord Chesterfield; "eloquent, entertaining, strong, and pathetic, as occasion required; for he had arguments, wit, and tears at his command." Speaking of his satirical poetry, his lordship says, "His compositions in that way were sometimes satirical, often licentious, but always full of wit." Several of these pieces are to be found in the "Craftsman."

† "His sudden passion," says lord Chesterfield, "was outrageous, but supported by great personal courage. He affected good nature and compassion, and perhaps his heart might feel the misfortunes and distresses of his fellow-creatures, but his hand was seldom or never stretched out to relieve them."

‡ Coxe.

the administration attributed to disappointed ambition and personal pique. Pulteney replied in a vein of caustic bitterness, and, believing lord Hervey to be the author, reflected in unmeasured terms upon the effeminacy of that nobleman.* A duel ensued, in which Pulteney slightly wounded his antagonist.† But the

* "Lord Hervey was the eldest son of the earl of Bristol, a nobleman," says Tindal, "not without wit, but a much better writer than speaker." Middleton eulogises his learning and talents in the dedication to the "Life of Cicero," and even the duchess of Marlborough allowed that he had "certainly parts and wit," although she stigmatised him as a wretched profligate. There cannot be any doubt that his lordship was a man of ability. His appearance, which was somewhat affected, owing rather to the delicacy of his health and the smallness of his stature, than to any false taste in dress or manners, exposed him to the ridicule of his contemporaries. Pope introduced him and Middleton into the "Dunciad," satirising the effeminacy of the one, and the flattery of the other:—

> "Narcissus, praised with all a parson's power,
> Looked a white lily sunk beneath a shower."

And, with the most malignant indelicacy, attacked his physical debility under the character of Sporus. Lord Hervey, having felt some attacks of epilepsy, adopted a strict regimen, which effectually arrested the progress of the malady. His daily nourishment was asses' milk and a flour biscuit. Upon this hint — which the miserable frame of the satirist ought to have warned him against using — he indulged his spleen in one of those invectives which are alike celebrated for their power and their malice.

> "Let Sporus tremble. A. What? that thing of silk,
> Sporus, that mere white curd of asses' milk?
> Satire or sense, alas! can Sporus feel?
> Who breaks a butterfly upon a wheel?
> * * * * *
> Amphibious thing! that acting either part,
> The trifling head, or the corrupted heart,
> Fop at the toilet, flatterer at the board,
> Now trips a lady, and now struts a lord.
> Eve's tempter thus the Rabbins have exprest,
> A cherub's face, a reptile all the rest,
> Beauty that shocks you, parts that none will trust,
> Wit that can creep, and pride that licks the dust."

Yet, notwithstanding his unfavourable appearance, and the prejudice the king conceived against him, lord Hervey was a great favourite at court, where his lively wit rendered him always agreeable. His political writings were numerous and effective, and a list of them is given by the earl of Orford in his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors."

† Upon the appearance of the "Reply," lord Hervey sent a message to Pulteney, desiring to know whether he was the author of it, to which Pulteney answered, that he would not satisfy him until he stated whether he was the author of the pamphlet. Lord Hervey immediately declared he was not (the pamphlet having been written by sir William Yonge, secretary at war); but Pulteney still refused to make any satisfaction, and a meeting was accordingly arranged in St. James's Park. Pelham, in a letter to lord Waldegrave says, that "both combatants were slightly wounded, but that Pulteney had once so much the advantage of lord Hervey, that he must have run him through had not his foot slipped. The seconds then interfered and parted them. Pulteney embraced his antagonist, expressed his concern at the cause of their quarrel, and declared he would never attack him again; but lord Hervey, maintaining a grave silence, bowed courteously, and they separated."

controversy did not end here. Several pamphlets appeared subsequently on both sides. Pulteney's private concerns were most unwarrantably exposed, and amongst other crimes laid to his charge, he was accused of having obtained the fee-simple of 9000*l.* per annum through the favour of the minister whom he was engaged in defaming. To this accusation he replied with vehemence, and, disclosing some private conversations that had formerly taken place respecting the prince of Wales, denounced Walpole for having conspired against his majesty before he came to the throne. This revelation produced a result the very contrary of what he calculated upon. The king, instead of being angry with Walpole, was inflamed against Pulteney, and with his own hand struck him out of the list of privy counsellors, dismissing him at the same time from all his commissions of the peace. Never was the frenzy of party carried to such frantic extremities. The opposition, goaded into madness by the indignities cast upon their leader, entered into a pledge of uncompromising hostility against Walpole; and Pulteney publicly announced that they had "come to a determined resolution not to listen to any treaty whatsoever, or from whomsoever it might come, in which the first and principal condition should not be to deliver him up to the justice of the country."

Yet wide and irreparable as the breach was between 1732.
them, and violently as they opposed each other in public, Pulteney and Walpole frequently entered into amicable conversation in the house of commons; for which they enjoyed ample opportunities, as Pulteney, although he was in opposition, always sat on the treasury bench. Parliament was convened on the 13th of January, and the king's speech congratulated the country on the execution of the treaty of Seville, which was supposed to be attended with insurmountable difficulties, and upon the restoration of peace in Europe through the treaty of Vienna. It was evident from the tone of the speech that ministers believed the opposition to be utterly frustrated, and de-

prived of all reasonable ground of cavil. But the vitality of a parliamentary cabal is not easily extinguished. While the success of the foreign negotiations was admitted, it was suggested by Pulteney that "if we were now right, he was certain the time had long ago elapsed when we might have been *as right* with infinitely less expense and trouble." As to the Pragmatic Sanction, he declared that he never regarded it in so formidable or so favourable an aspect as ministers had done at different times; and, admitting it to be agreeable to the general interests of England that the Austrian succession should be transmitted whole and undivided, he doubted the policy of binding ourselves by an explicit guarantee to maintain it at a future and indeterminate period, when England might, for reasons which could not then be foreseen, find it incompatible with her interest to engage in a foreign war upon any account; and no alternative would be left us but to violate our faith, or risk our safety. To violate the national faith, he observed, was nothing new with ministers, for the treaty of Vienna was a violation of the treaty of Hanover; nor would he allow that the interest or honour of the nation had been consulted in any of the late transactions; nor indeed had any one treaty been signed for the previous sixteen years which had been made, or even intended, for the good of these kingdoms. Such were the new objections of Pulteney; and since he could not deny that the result of the ministerial policy was beneficial to the country, he was reduced to the necessity of protesting against the manner in which it was accomplished. "I hope," he exclaimed, "that all our affairs abroad are now set to rights, and that our domestic grievances are in a fair way of being redressed; but if they are so, I must say, it is something like a pilot, who, though he has a clear, a safe, and a straight passage for going into port, yet takes it into his head to carry the ship a great way about, through sands, rocks, and shallows, and thereby loses a great many of the seamen, destroys a great deal of the tackle and the rigging, and puts the owners to a vast

expense; however, at last, by chance he hits the port, and then triumphs in his conduct." Even the sturdy Shippen could find nothing to complain of but the complimentary terms of the address, which he moved an amendment to omit. These frivolous expedients, however, were of no avail, and the address passed without a division.

Foiled upon all points in reference to foreign politics, the opposition now opened an attack upon what Pulteney called "domestic grievances." The existence of a standing army afforded a plausible topic of popular declamation. It was, no doubt, obviously inconsistent on the part of the tories to find fault with an ancient institution to which they were so notoriously attached; but tories out of office had a different creed from that which they acted upon when they were in the administration, and upon this occasion they gave ample proofs of the elasticity of their consciences. Besides Pulteney, who gloried in the name of whig, headed the onslaught, and, by his personal influence, imparted something like a character of honesty to its movements. The old arguments were repeated with as little weight as ever, seeming rather, indeed, to have lost something of their passing effect by the frequency of repetition. It was urged that a standing army in time of peace was unconstitutional; that it was a grievous burden to the people; that it was unnecessary; that the civil force was sufficient to preserve internal tranquillity; that other nations had been enslaved by standing armies, which were always dangerous instruments in the hands of despots; and that, although the reigning monarch was, of course, incapable of employing the troops for any tyrannical purposes, another prince might arise, and make use of them to subvert the public liberties. The court party answered all these objections by coolly asserting, that if a strong standing force were not then actually necessary, it was impossible to say when it might become so; that it was important to keep it up for the sake of maintaining the reputation of Great Britain with other nations; that the

reduction of the military was always followed by popular insurrections; and that a "parliamentary army," the phrase by which they endeavoured to disguise the perpetual tyranny, never yet did any harm. A motion was made to reduce the army to 12,000 effective men, but it was rejected by a majority of 241 against 171, and the original ministerial proposal of 17,709 was triumphantly carried.

Pulteney followed up this fruitless effort, by moving for an account of the savings arising from vacancies in the army; but it was hardly considered worth a discussion, and after a few words from Walpole, it was negatived.

The pensions' bill was brought forward for the third time, and met with the same fate as on the two former occasions, passing the commons, and being rejected by the lords, who treated it as a specious attempt to limit the power of the crown, for the unworthy purpose of endeavouring to secure a little temporary popularity.

The great measure of the session was a bill introduced by Walpole, for reviving the duty on salt. This proposition may be regarded as an experiment preparatory to those more expanded plans of financial improvement which had long occupied his attention, and which he soon afterwards brought to perfection. The immediate object of this bill was to substitute a duty on salt, for one shilling in the pound of the land-tax, the remainder of which — one shilling more — he signified his intention to remit in the ensuing session. The debate was animated and elaborate, and the proposal of the minister was resisted with considerable ability by Pulteney and his colleagues. But the clearness and cogency of Walpole's arguments were conclusive of the benefits to be derived from the change. He showed that the pressure of the salt-tax, when it came to be distributed amongst the consumers, including all classes of the people, was so slight as to be hardly perceptible; that while it was in existence it never produced a single complaint, and when it was repealed

no one thought himself benefitted; and that, in addition to the advantage of falling lightly upon individuals, it fell equally upon all, and produced, from the universality of its use, a large annual revenue. On the other hand, he showed that the land-tax was unjust and unequal; that the landholders bore but a small proportion to the whole population; that no man contributed to such a tax but those who were possessed of a land estate; and that many landed gentlemen had been ruined through its effects. The favourable reception of this measure, although it was carried only by a small majority, determined the minister to prosecute his more comprehensive project, of which it was the initial step. He formed this determination in the midst of a storm of accusations, charging him with malignant designs against the liberties of the country. The anticipation of a "General Excise" threw the opposition into a state of anarchy. They believed, or pretended to believe, that the dispersion of several hundred excise officers over the country would place in the hands of the government an extensive machinery of corruption, to be employed as it might suit their purposes, in overawing the elections, or advancing any other objects adverse to the interests of the people. But Walpole, evading a direct reply, turned aside the charge of contemplating such a project, by directing attention to the immediate question under consideration, and distinctly demonstrating the practical benefits of the proposed alteration.

The close of the session was marked by the announcement of the formal accession of the states-general to the treaty of Vienna. The parliament was prorogued on the 1st of June; and his majesty, leaving the queen regent in his absence, paid a visit to his German dominions, where he had the satisfaction, at last, of receiving the long delayed investitures of Bremen and Verdun, which had cost Great Britain so much negotiation, blood, and treasure.

The incidents of the recess were utterly destitute of public interest. The clamour concerning the excise

was assiduously cultivated out of doors by the opposition, who effectually succeeded in producing an unexampled ferment that seriously threatened the safety of the administration. The debates which had taken place on the salt duties, and some vague reports about the duties on wine and tobacco, led to a general impression that the ministers intended either to put an excise upon these articles, or to introduce a general excise into the country. Walpole had carefully avoided during the discussions making any admission on the subject; but the tone in which he vindicated the principle of the duty on salt was assumed as evidence of a design to extend it still farther. The very word "excise" became a signal for convulsion, and was held in as much abhorrence as the name of the pretender.

There undoubtedly existed some excuses for this popular prejudice; but they were founded, as the apologies for all such prejudices are, in ignorance and passion. Excise duties had become odious to the country from the grinding rapacity with which they had been formerly collected—a rapacity which had grown out of particular circumstances, and which belonged to the abuse and not to the true use of such imposts, but which having been traditionally interwoven with the general notion of an excise levy could not be easily separated from it by the application of argument alone. It required time and practical demonstration of its utility to reconcile the people to a mode of raising a revenue, which they had hitherto regarded as peculiarly oppressive and tyrannical.

The first excise duties collected in England were imposed by parliament, during the civil wars in 1641, upon ale, beer, cyder, perry, and other home-made liquors intended for sale. The attempt to enforce them produced serious riots, and it was only by promising to abolish them at the end of the war that the people could be induced to submit. When the war was over, however, parliament, instead of fulfilling its pledge, imposed fresh excise duties upon other articles, intending to go still farther, according to Pym, as "the people got used to it, by little

and little." But the increasing discontent, aggravated by the faithlessness of the legislature, led to the repeal of all those duties at the restoration, except the excise upon beer, ale, cyder, and perry, which produced about 666,983*l.* This revenue was then divided into two portions; the one called the temporary, because it was granted only for the life of the king, and the other called the hereditary excise, because it was granted to Charles II. as an equivalent for the court of wards and other rights of the crown which had excited the jealousy of parliament, and which his majesty consented to relinquish in exchange for these levies. As the only security the king possessed for the sure fulfilment of the bargain was the honour of parliament, the commons, to prove their good faith, made the laws for the collection of the excise so severe, that in many respects they took an inquisitorial and despotic form, which was perhaps not unjustly regarded as an infringement on private property and personal liberty. A variety of penalties and other punishments followed in the wake of these injurious enactments, and embraced such a multitude of persons as to render the clamour against them almost universal.* The horror of these oppressions was revived by the rumours that prevailed respecting Walpole's intention to resort to a similar system of finance upon an extensive scale, even before he had openly declared his plans, or, indeed, before he had thoroughly matured them.

Such was the state of the public mind when the parliament was summoned early in the following January. 1733. His majesty dimly shadowed forth the fiscal reforms of Walpole, by specially drawing attention to the estimates, and recommending, "as a consideration worthy the commons of Great Britain, that in all their deliberations, as well upon raising the annual supplies, as the distribution of the annual revenues, they pursue such measures as would most conduce to the present and future ease of those they represented." His majesty also significantly alluded to the recent clamours, admonishing both houses

* Tindal. Coxe. "The Craftsman."

upon the necessity of giving "all possible despatch to the public business, and that nothing could give more weight and credit to all their resolutions than to avoid unreasonable heats and animosities, and not to suffer themselves to be diverted by any specious pretences from steadfastly pursuing the true interest of their country."

These passages were boldly seized upon by the opposition, who regarded them as omens of the coming tempest. Sir John Barnard, member for London, declared that he did not know what was meant by "unreasonable heats and animosities," and that if any man were vain enough to endeavour to impose on the house by "specious pretences," there were men of understanding and integrity sufficient to expose him. "Now," he continued, "there seems to be a great jealousy without doors, as if something were intended to be done in this session of parliament that may be destructive to our liberties, and detrimental to our trade. From whence this jealousy has arisen, I do not know; but it is certain that there is such a jealousy among all sorts of people, and in all corners of the nation; and therefore we ought to take the first opportunity to quiet the minds of the people, and to assure them that they may depend upon the honour and integrity of the members of this house." He concluded by moving, as an amendment, that the words, "and such as shall be consistent with the trade, interest, and liberty of the nation" be added to the address. Shippen followed, dwelt upon the uneasiness of the public mind, said that it was so general that it could not be ascribed to any one set of men, but that the whole people of England seemed to be united in the spirit of jealousy and opposition, and concluded by moving the further addition to the address of the words, "and such as shall be consistent with the honour and justice of parliament." Walpole, to the manifest astonishment of the house, seconded the motion. It was to him, he said, a matter of absolute indifference whether they added the words or not, as it was not to be presumed that any thing was in contemplation inconsistent with the trade

or liberties of the nation or the honour of parliament. "If the people," observed the minister, "are hampered or injured in their trade, they must feel it, and they will feel it, before they begin to complain; in such case it is the duty of this house, not only to hear their complaints, but, if possible, to find out a remedy. *But the people may be taught to complain; they may be made to feel imaginary ills, and by such practices they are often induced to make complaints before they feel any uneasiness.*" The amendments were carried, and the angry temper of the opposition was temporarily calmed; but several skirmishes took place before the great battle was fought. In the mean while other topics intervened, which claim attention in the first instance.

On the motion relative to the army estimates, which was similar to that of the previous year, another attempt was made to procure a reduction, but with no better success. Horace Walpole declared that the number of troops proposed was absolutely necessary, and would continue to be necessary as long as the present family was on the throne. Shippen replied that the subject had taken a new turn; that, in former debates, the continuance of the army for one year was all that was contended for, but now it appeared the army was to be perpetual. "This," he exclaimed, "I will not believe can come from his majesty. His majesty *knows* how much the nation is loaded with debts and taxes, and how inconsistent it is with our constitution to keep up a standing army in time of peace." These observations having excited some strong animadversions, Shippen observed that he was "peculiarly unfortunate; for that in a former parliament he had incurred the severe censure of the house for asserting that the late monarch was *unacquainted* with the constitution; and he now gave high offence by asserting that his present majesty was *not* unacquainted with the constitution." The motion was carried by a majority of 68.

The depredations committed by Spain upon British merchants occasioned a spirited debate, which ended

with a motion for an address to his majesty, requiring to know what satisfaction had been made for those wrongs. But his majesty had nothing to communicate on the subject (as Walpole fairly warned the house), and could only state in reply, that the meetings between the commissaries of the two crowns had been delayed by unforeseen accidents. The fact was, that no progress whatever had been made in the negotiations concerning these vexatious disputes. The king of Spain had issued an order, evasively worded, to prohibit the *unjust* seizure of English merchant ships, and the king of England had pledged himself that no English ships of war should, under any pretext, convoy or protect vessels carrying on an unlawful trade. But beyond this nothing was done towards defining mutual rights, or establishing a competent tribunal to decide the doubtful questions that were constantly arising in the American seas.

The next subject which occupied the attention of parliament was a bill for securing and encouraging the trade of the sugar colonies in America. The policy of this measure was very equivocal, and its ultimate effect betrayed the danger of legislating between two colonial dependencies for the sole benefit of one. It appeared that a valuable commerce was carried on between the British colonies in North America and the French West Indies, the former exchanging corn, lumber, and cattle, for the rums, sugars, and molasses of the latter, to the direct prejudice of the British West Indies. In order to put a stop to this trade, heavy duties were placed upon all such foreign produce imported into America; and the French not only lost a valuable market, but were forced to procure lumber and provisions from Canada, at that time an obscure and barren province, but which rapidly rose into importance by the commerce which was thus drawn to her distant shores. This was the first instance in which the British parliament levied a tax upon America; but so exclusively was it designed as a trade regulation, without the most remote intention of raising a revenue from America through its operation,

that the produce of the duties, too insignificant to attract the cupidity of the mother-country, lay for many years unclaimed in the royal exchequer. The Americans regarded it purely as a commercial arrangement, and when it was subsequently drawn into a precedent for instituting a regular system of taxation, at once dangerous and unconstitutional, their surprise and resentment broke out into an insurrection that ended in the establishment of their independence.

As the time for announcing the great scheme of revenue reform drew near, Walpole, probably with a view to test his influence with the house beforehand, introduced a motion for alienating a portion of the sinking fund for the present purposes of the state. This daring and dishonourable measure darkens the glory of his life, and has extorted, even from the most partial of his biographers, an unequivocal expression of censure. Such a proposal would have been discreditable coming from any quarter, but at the hands of Walpole, the author of the sinking fund, it was suicidal. In order to render the character of this measure intelligible, it will be necessary to enter into a few retrospective details.

The sinking fund, composed of the surpluses of duties and revenues, was originally formed by act of parliament for the liquidation of the national debt; and its application to that object alone was strictly enjoined by the act, which explicitly declared that it was to be appropriated "to and for none other use, intent, or purpose whatever." This enactment was scrupulously observed throughout the reign of George I., and the fund gradually increased to such an amount, that ministers were enabled to reduce the national interest from 6 to 5 per cent., and to discharge in the course of a few years, from 1717 to 1728, no less than 2,698,416*l.* Its average amount was now estimated at 1,200,000*l.* But it had no sooner attained this power than silent encroachments began to be made upon it, by appropriating to other purposes either the taxes which yielded the sur-

pluses, or the surpluses themselves, thus forestalling the sums that ought to have been paid into the fund, an ingenious procedure which evaded the direct violation of the law, while it virtually alienated those sources of revenue which the law assigned expressly for the reduction of the debt. As these encroachments, however, were not literally made upon the fund itself, they attracted little notice and less opposition. It was reserved for Walpole to make an open attack upon the sacred deposit he had contributed to create for the national creditor, and which he had fenced round with statutory safeguards.

Half a million of money being voted for the service of the year, Walpole proposed to take it out of the sinking fund, which he said would enable him to continue the land-tax at one shilling in the pound; adding, that if the proposition should be objected to, he knew no means of providing for the expenditure except that of restoring the land-tax to its original rate of two shillings. His speech on this remarkable occasion was short, but it contained the whole of the reasons that could be urged in defence of the measure. He asserted that the public expense ought always to be raised in the way that was least burdensome to the people; that it was absolutely necessary to ease the landed interest; and that, on the other hand, the public creditors, so far from being anxious to have the principal of the debt paid off rapidly, desired nothing so much as to have it protracted. "The competition amongst them," he observed, "is not who shall be paid first, but who shall be paid last." As to the right to alienate the fund, he maintained that it was wholly at the disposal of parliament.

The sagacity of the minister was never evinced with more effect than in this memorable proceeding, which, violent and faithless as it was, nevertheless was one of the most popular measures of the administration. It was necessary to raise money to meet the expenditure contingent upon a system of pacification which was nearly as costly as a war, because it required the country

to be always prepared for war. But how was that money to be raised? The people were opposed to an increase of their burdens, and might readily be supposed to favour the alienation of the sinking fund in preference to the imposition of new taxes. The monied interest, suffering serious depression at a time when the bank was making loans at three per cent., could not have been more effectually served than by a measure which arrested the liquidation of the debt, and sustained, if it did not increase, the value of money. And the landed interest, which had hitherto almost uniformly opposed the government, propitiated by the diversion of the burden from their own shoulders, were naturally pleased to see it thrown upon a quarter in which they were not directly involved, and which hardly seemed to affect any class of the people. The proposal, consequently, carried with it the concurrence and support of these three considerable interests, while it conciliated an important parliamentary section which had never before cordially acquiesced in the policy of the government.

In vain the opposition laid bare the seeds of flagrant injustice and future ruin that were sown by the project: in vain they warned the minister of the iniquity of pillaging a sacred deposit that was intended to accumulate for the benefit of posterity, to free the nation from encumbrances, and strengthen her resources by liberating her trade and industry; in vain they conjured him not to destroy with his own hand the great monument of his own fame; and in vain sir John Barnard, in the heat of a prolonged and furious debate, emphatically prophesied "that the author of such an expedient must expect the curses of posterity." That minister, says a modern historian, must have been more than man had he preferred the blessings of posterity to the curses of his own age, or sacrificed present ease to the dread of remote evils.*

The predictions of the opposition were accomplished

* Coxe.

even more swiftly than their worst fears could have led them to anticipate. The sanction of parliament being once obtained for the alienation of the fund, it continued to be appropriated without intermission to the necessities of the state. In 1734, the whole produce of the year, 1,200,000*l.*, was taken from it; in 1735 it was anticipated; and in 1736 it was mortgaged.* Walpole must have foreseen this result, and, probably, contemplated it as inevitable. But he legislated, not for England, but for his own age; and relied upon his excise scheme to restore, in times to come, the fabric he thus wantonly sacrificed to the pressure of expediency. Nor can he be very seriously blamed for adopting such a course, when we find that in a house consisting of 380 members he carried the motion by a majority of 110 votes.

In the course of the debate, Pulteney attempted to force Walpole into some explanation of the views he was suspected to entertain concerning the institution of an excise. "There is another thing," he exclaimed, "a very terrible affair impending! A monstrous project! Yea, more monstrous than has ever yet been represented! It is such a project as has struck terror into the minds of most gentlemen within this house, and into the minds of all men without doors, who have any regard to the happiness or constitution of their country —I mean, that monster, the excise! that plan of arbitrary power, which is expected to be laid before this house in the present session of parliament." Walpole remained silent under this infliction; and on the 27th of February moved for a call of the house on that day fortnight, which again roused all the fury of the opposition. Sir John Rushout declared that they had waited with impatience ever since the beginning of the session for the "glorious scheme" that was to make them all happy, and he hoped it would not be put off till the end of the session, when gentlemen were tired out with attendance, and obliged to return home to mind their own

* Price on the National Debt.

private affairs. To this insinuation Walpole calmly replied, that he certainly had a scheme which he intended very soon to lay before them; that he never desired to surprise the house in any thing, and thanked God that he never had any occasion to use the low art of taking advantage of the end of the session for any thing he had to propose. He concluded by observing, that if a project could be framed to prevent the frauds committed in the revenue, the author of such project would deserve the thanks of his country and of every fair trader; because taxes not duly collected were a premium to the smuggler, and an oppression on the fair trader, which frequently ended in his ruin. The soundness of this reasoning was incontrovertible; and sir William Wyndham, the mouthpiece of his party on this occasion, was driven to the stale expedient of lustily demanding whether the constitution was to be sacrificed to the prevention of frauds in the revenue?

The interval between this by-scene and the call of the house was busily occupied on both sides; by the minister in preparing his measure, and by the opposition in inflaming the clamour out of doors, and making a strong party against it within. All this time, nobody knew what the scheme really was to be, in what form it was to be submitted, or what interests it was intended to touch. All that was known, or, more properly, suspected, was that Walpole intended to introduce something in the shape of an excise; an experiment which was regarded with such horror, that it was represented as a monster feeding on its own vitals, and compared to the Trojan horse, which contained an army in its belly.

The agitation that was created by the prospect of such a measure, amounted to a species of popular frenzy. The writers and orators in the ranks of the opposition left no means untried to work up this frantic spirit into commotion: they sounded the trumpet of alarm from one end of the kingdom to the other; and did not hesitate to assert that the plan would tear up the constitution by the roots, annihilate the parliament, invest the

king with absolute powers, and throw open the property of every man in the country to a state inquisition. Meetings were industriously got up in a variety of places; and numerous constituencies, including that of London, so often behind the intelligence of the age, expressly instructed their representatives to impede the measure by all means which the usages of parliament would permit. Nor were the agents of disorder content with putting all these engines of resistance into play; they organised tumults in the streets, and letters were delivered by the beadles and other officers in the parishes and wards of the city to procure a multitude of people to assemble at the doors, and choke the avenues of the house on the 15th of March (the day finally settled for opening the business), with the design of overawing the proceedings of the legislature.

In the face of all these menaces and impediments, Walpole unfolded his plan, which, instead of being a general excise, as was anticipated, proved to be simply the conversion of the customs' duties on wine and tobacco into duties of excise. It was evidently an experimental measure, however; and had it succeeded, the whole of the customs would have been ultimately converted into excise, making London, in the language of the minister, a free port, and, by consequence, the market of the world.

The principles of political economy and finance were, at that time, ill understood; and many erroneous notions prevailed amongst the people on such subjects. The most remarkable of these was, that the real income of every country originates in the land, and that, therefore, all taxes should be imposed on land. This opinion, supported by the authority of Locke, and all the eminent writers of the day, was implicitly received throughout the country as an incontrovertible axiom. Walpole entertained exactly the opposite view. He maintained, that a tax on land was a greater burden than taxes on articles of consumption; and that the method of raising a revenue by customs was more oppressive to commerce;

and more injurious to merchants and fair dealers, by exposing them to vexatious expenses and incessant frauds, than the method of raising a revenue by excise. His financial policy, therefore, was constantly and progressively directed towards the attainment of this object. He began, as we have seen, by resuming the duty on salt and diminishing the tax on land, and he now proposed to abolish two heavy customs' duties and to substitute two excise duties in their place.

Walpole's definition of the difference between the customs and excise furnishes a key to the whole subject. "The duties known by the name of customs are certain rates imposed by authority of parliament upon all commodities imported from abroad; which rates are either to be paid by the importer, upon the entry at importation, with different allowances and discounts for prompt payment, or they must be secured by bond, payable in a certain number of months, and, as well as the duties paid down, are repaid and drawn back upon re-exportation, as the bonds given, vacated and discharged; or, in short, customs are duties paid by the merchant, upon *importation;* excises, duties payable by the retail traders upon consumption." The complexity of the former contrasts strongly with the simplicity of the latter, admitting an endless variety of frauds, which the regularity and directness of the excise surveillance reduce almost to exclusion.

The specific details of the scheme were the division of all commodities into taxed and untaxed; the former to be confined to a few articles of general consumption, the latter to include the principal necessaries of life, and all the raw materials of manufacture. The grand feature of the whole was the free importation of the necessaries of life, and of raw materials. By the inevitable operation of this principle, the price of labour would be reduced, and the manufacturer would be enabled to undersell all competitors in the foreign markets, as well as to supply the home consumption on the cheapest terms. The value of this result to an insulated

country, where the increase of population must unavoidably exceed the increase of food, is obvious. Manufactures can support large numbers on a limited surface, while agriculture demands a wide field for the maintenance of a few. To facilitate the importation of the necessaries of life, and the raw materials of manufacture, is clearly the soundest policy an English minister can adopt. Walpole's sagacity early penetrated this important truth, and anticipated the theories which Smith and later writers have since given to the world in more complete and philosophical forms. But the superstitions of the age were against him, and he failed.

The opposition, unable, or afraid to grapple with the elementary part of the question, confined themselves chiefly to the light and showy straws that floated on the surface. They asserted, that if frauds were committed, measures ought to be taken to prevent their repetition; they recurred to the old dogma about the land-tax; cast the most violent abuse upon ministers; and, referring to the turbulent crowds that thronged the doors of Westminster Hall, they triumphantly maintained that the whole nation was opposed to the scheme. "Gentlemen may say what they please," exclaimed Walpole, betrayed at last into an unusual degree of heat, "of the multitudes now at our door, and in all the avenues leading to this house; they may call them a modest multitude if they will; but whatever temper they were in when they came hither, it may be very much altered now, after having waited so long at our door. It may be very easy for some designing seditious person to raise a tumult and disorder amongst them; and when tumults are once begun, no man knows where they may end: he is a greater man than any I know in the nation, that could with the same ease appease them. For this reason, I think it was neither regular nor prudent to use any methods for bringing such multitudes to this place, under any pretence whatever. Gentlemen may give them what name they think fit: it may be said they came hither as humble supplicants, but I know whom the law calls

sturdy beggars; and those who brought them hither could not be certain but that they might have behaved in the same manner." The unlucky phrase of *sturdy beggars* was immediately attacked by sir John Barnard, who gave a turn to it which Walpole did not intend*; and in the midst of much noise, the first resolution was put and carried by a majority of 61, the numbers being 266 against 205. The three remaining resolutions were then agreed to without a division. The debate did not terminate until two o'clock in the morning, then considered a very late hour; and as sir Robert Walpole passed out to his carriage, the people were so exasperated that they attempted to commit some personal violence upon him, in which they would probably have succeeded, but for the prompt and resolute interference of his son and general Churchill.

On the 16th the debate was renewed with unabated vigour at both sides, and the report from the committee was carried by a majority of 60. The bill was brought in and read a first time on the 4th of April. Successive motions were made to have it withdrawn, postponed, and printed; but they were severally defeated. On the 11th, the sheriffs of London, accompanied by a train of merchants in two hundred carriages, came down to the house to present a petition against the bill. Sir John Barnard moved that they might be heard by counsel, but he was over-ruled by a majority of 17. Petitions were also presented from Nottingham and Coventry, and the excitement was rapidly spreading to other places of consequence. These incontestible evidences of public opinion — erroneous as that opinion was — were not lost upon the minister. Convinced of the impossibility of rendering any measure effective in practice that was thus carried against the feelings of the country, he postponed the second reading to the 12th of June; and, as it was

* Coxe in his "Memoirs of Walpole," to which laborious and able work reference has been made for most of the details concerning the excise scheme, says that he was informed by lord John Cavendish, that the minister did not use the phrase *sturdy beggars* as a matter of reproach, but to mark that the petitioners against the excise were formidable petitioners

generally understood that the house would adjourn before that day, this movement was regarded as a tacit abandonment of the bill. The opposition endeavoured to obtain its distinct and substantive rejection with a vote of condemnation; but the sense of the house was so strongly opposed to any anti-ministerial declaration, that they did not venture to peril their advantage on a specific motion.

Walpole adopted this course on his own personal responsibility. A meeting of the supporters of the bill had taken place the evening before, and their unanimous voice was in favour of persevering with the measure. They urged the danger of yielding to clamour out of doors; asserting that there would be an end of supplies if mobs were to control the legislature in the manner of raising them. It was on this occasion Walpole made his memorable declaration, that no revenue ought to be levied in a free country that depended on the sword and bayonet for its collection. He assured his colleagues and adherents "how conscious he was of having meant well; that in the present inflamed temper of the people the act could not be carried into execution without an armed force; that there would be an end of the liberties of England if supplies were to be raised by the sword; if, therefore, the resolution was to proceed with the bill, he would instantly request the king's permission to resign, for he would not be the minister to enforce taxes at the expense of blood."

The intelligence of the surrender of the bill diffused the most extravagant joy amongst the people. The event was celebrated by bonfires, and rejoicings, and ringing of bells. The monument of London was illuminated, the chancellor of the exchequer was burned in effigy, cockades were worn inscribed with the motto, "Liberty, Property, and no Excise!" and even the university of Oxford gave way to the most indecent excesses, which lasted for three days. It affords a curious and humiliating proof of the occasional unsoundness of popular feeling, that the people were so violently opposed

to Walpole on the excise scheme, the most beneficial measure of his administration, while they supported him with equal zeal, although with less clamour, in his spoliation of the sinking fund—a measure at once unjust and destructive.

Pulteney and his followers believed that Walpole's disgrace was now certain. But they were grossly deceived. His power was never so great. His ascendency in the commons was established in a subsequent vote, expressly forced upon the house as a trial of strength, when he carried away a majority of 85; and his influence with the king was decisively exhibited by the dismissal, two days after the excise bill was abandoned, of six peers who, holding offices under the crown, had gone over to the opposition on that occasion. These peers were, lord Chesterfield, lord steward of the household; lord Burlington, captain of the band of pensioners; lord Clinton, lord of the bedchamber; the duke of Montrose, keeper of the great seal; the earl of Stair, vice-admiral; and the earl of Marchmont, lord-register; in addition to which, lord Cobham and the duke of Bolton were deprived of their regiments. Several confidential friends were appointed to the vacant places: his son, lord Walpole, was made lord-lieutenant of the county of Devon, and sir Charles Wager, on his especial recommendation, was created first lord of the admiralty in the room of viscount Torrington, recently deceased.

The king closed the session on the 11th of June, adverting in strong terms to the artifices that had been so seduously and successfully employed to inflame the minds of his subjects, and "by the most unjust misrepresentations to raise tumults and disorders, that almost threatened the peace of the kingdom."

CHAP. IX.

1733—1735.

CONTEST FOR THE THRONE OF POLAND. — ELECTION OF STANISLAUS. — FORCIBLE PROCLAMATION OF AUGUSTUS. — FRANCE, SPAIN, AND SARDINIA DECLARE WAR AGAINST AUSTRIA. — OPERATIONS OF THE CAMPAIGNS IN GERMANY AND ITALY. — THE EMPEROR CLAIMS SUCCOURS FROM ENGLAND — IS REFUSED — THREATENS TO OPEN A NEGOTIATION WITH SPAIN. — OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — POLICY OF WALPOLE. — TACTICS OF THE OPPOSITION. — FOREIGN AFFAIRS. — MILITARY PREROGATIVE OF THE CROWN ASSAILED. — MOTION FOR AN ADDRESS CONCERNING THE LATE DISMISSALS. — PLAN OF PROCEEDING OF THE ANTI-MINISTERIALISTS. — ATTEMPT TO REPEAL THE SEPTENNIAL ACT. — SPEECHES OF WYNDHAM AND WALPOLE. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION. — PROGRESS OF AFFAIRS IN THE RECESS. — GENERAL ELECTION. — BRIEF AND UNINTERESTING SESSION. — WAR DECLARED BETWEEN SPAIN AND PORTUGAL. — DECISIVE INTERPOSITION OF ENGLAND. — ARDUOUS NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ALLIES AND THE EMPEROR. — GENERAL PACIFICATION.

WHILE the English government was absorbed in domestic affairs, the materials of fresh discords were rapidly forming on the continent of Europe. The death of Augustus II., king of Poland and elector of Saxony, in the preceding January, produced a new source of rivalry and disunion. There were two candidates for the vacant throne: Augustus, the son of the late monarch, whose pretensions were supported by Austria and Russia; and Stanislaus, who had formerly been placed upon the throne of Poland by Charles XII., but who had been compelled to relinquish it on the decline of his patron's fortunes. The claims of Stanislaus were now sustained by Louis XV. of France, who was married to his daughter, and whose influence was paramount in the diet. The succession, agreeably to custom, was to be determined by election, and Louis declared his determination

not to suffer any interference with the freedom of the electors.

The conflicting desires and interests involved in this proceeding placed the English minister in a situation of extreme difficulty. He was no less anxious to exclude Stanislaus than Austria or Russia; while he was unwilling to offend France by taking an active share in his exclusion. But Walpole's genius was equal to the emergency. In answer to the applications that were made to him by the several powers engaged, he gave such assurances as satisfied each; but in no instance left it to be implied that, under any circumstances, he contemplated the co-operation of force. His instructions to the ambassadors at the different courts were marked by the same caution and prudence; and the resident at Warsaw was strictly enjoined to give the strongest assurances of his Britannic majesty's affection and friendship towards that republic; to declare upon all occasions for a free election; to favour Augustus with the utmost discretion and moderation, and not to join in the exclusion of any candidate except the pretender; in which case, should any encouragement be given to the chevalier, he was to protest against it, and leave the kingdom.

In the mean while, the election took place, and in the month of September Stanislaus was proclaimed king of Poland. The representatives of Russia and Austria protested against the choice of the diet; an army of 60,000 Austrians gathered on the frontier of Silesia; and the Saxon party, supported by 50,000 Russians, entered Poland by the Lithuanian border, and penetrated to Warsaw without resistance. Panic-struck by this unexpected movement, the adherents of Stanislaus dispersed, that unfortunate prince fled precipitately to Dantzic, where he was pursued and besieged by the Russians and Saxons, and Augustus was proclaimed and crowned in the suburbs of the capital on the 17th of January, 1734.

Stanislaus at length found means to escape from 1734.
Dantzic, when the city surrendered; and universal submission having taken place to the authority of Augustus,

a general amnesty was granted to the partisans of his discomfited rival.

The sovereignty of Poland was, therefore, finally settled; but the court of Versailles, indignant at the breach of faith by which its influence was set aside, resolved to revenge the insult upon the territories of the emperor, whose dominions lay more open to attack than those of the czarina. The emperor denied that he had acted offensively against Stanislaus, inasmuch as he had not sent any troops into Poland; but the disposition exhibited by his minister at Warsaw, and the assembling of a formidable force on the frontier, were held to be equivalent to armed interference. War was accordingly declared by France, in which she was joined by Spain and Sardinia; and the declaration was followed by instant hostilities. A French army, under the command of the duke of Berwick, passed the Rhine, and took Fort Kehl; and another corps, at the same moment, over-ran Lorraine.

During these operations, prince Eugene, now in the decline of life, was compelled to keep the defensive at Heilbron, waiting for reinforcements to enable him to make head against the invaders. The winter months afforded to both sides an opportunity to prepare for more extensive movements. In the spring the duke of Berwick advanced to the town of Philipsburg, which he invested; but on the 12th of June he was killed in the trenches, and the command devolved on the marquis d'Asfeldt. Prince Eugene, taking advantage of this event, advanced to the relief of the town; but he found the French lines so strong, that he considered it prudent to fall back upon Heidelberg. The governor of Philipsburg surrendered upon honourable terms; and the campaign ended about the beginning of October.

The imperial arms experienced similar misfortunes in Naples and Lombardy.

Don Carlos, invited to the throne of Naples by the nobility of that kingdom, resolved to avail himself of the moment, when the forces of Austria, called into action in so many different quarters, were weakened by dis-

persion. He commenced his march in February, entered Naples in triumph, and was received with open arms by the people. The German viceroy, unable to offer any effective resistance, retired to Nocera, where he endeavoured to assemble the militia, with the intention of forming a camp at Barletta. But, rapidly pursued by the count de Montemar, he was compelled to give battle in the plain of Bitonto in Apuglia, where he was completely routed on the 25th of May, a great number of his principal officers falling into the hands of the Spaniards. Don Carlos was now formally proclaimed king of Naples. Montemar, created duke of Bitonto in honour of the recent victory, quickly reduced Gaeta, Capua, and all the other places where any remnants of the imperialists yet lingered; and throwing 20,000 troops into Sicily, brought that place under the sovereignty of the new king. By this last achievement the whole country came into the possession of the Spaniards, except Messina, Syracuse, and Trepani.

The progress of the allies in Lombardy, was equally disastrous to Austria. The united forces of France and Piedmont, commanded by the king of Sardinia and the venerable marshal de Villars*, reduced Tortona in the month of January. The imperial army, under the command of count Merci, appeared in great strength on the banks of the Po, crossed that river in the face of the allies, obliged Villars to retreat, and took the castle of Colorno. Villars, incapable of the fatigues of the campaign, was compelled by illness to retire to Turin, where he died, covered with glory, at the age of eighty. His command devolved on the marshal de Coigny, who engaged the imperialists on the 29th of June. Both armies

* When this brave veteran was invited to place himself at the head of the army destined for Italy, he repeated the following lines from the "Bajazet" of Racine:—

"Quoi! tu crois, cher Osmin, que ma gloire passée
Flatte encore leur valeur et vit dans leur pensée!
Tu crois qu'ils me suivroient encore avec plaisir,
Et qu'ils reconnoitroient la voix de leur visir!"

This wit is attested by Voltaire. Towards the end of the siege of Milan, somebody asked his age.—"Quel âge avez-vous, monsieur le maréchal?" he replied, "Dans peu des jours j'aurois Mil-an."

fought with obstinacy from eleven in the morning until four in the afternoon. Early in the day, the count Merci was killed; but his place was supplied with courage and ability by the prince of Wirtemberg. The loss on both sides was heavy; and towards evening the imperialists retired in the direction of Monte Cirugalo, leaving 5000 dead bodies on the field. From thence they retreated to Reggio, and afterwards moved to the plains of Carpi, where count Konigsegg assumed the command, surprised the French on the banks of the Secchia, and took 2000 prisoners. A general engagement subsequently took place at Guastalla, where the imperialists were again obliged to retreat, with a loss of 5000 men, crossing the Po, and taking post at Mirandola.

The emperor, thus pressed upon all sides, claimed from the king of England the succours stipulated by the second treaty of Vienna. The demand was just, and it was urged in a spirit which clearly evinced the emperor's conviction that it could not be refused. England was fairly committed to his cause, not alone by the treaty, but by the part she had taken to procure the exclusion of Stanislaus, the validity of whose election her minister at Warsaw refused to acknowledge. The claim was formally urged upon the court of London by the imperial ambassador. It produced some differences of opinion, that plunged the administration into fresh embarrassments. The king was decidedly in favour of acceding to the demand at once; the queen, generally inclined to a pacific policy, did not venture to oppose the desires of his majesty, which were so obviously founded in honourable considerations; lord Harrington, whose office had drawn him personally into the former negotiations with the court of Vienna, supported the same views, in which he was sustained by a portion of the cabinet. Walpole, alone, was opposed to the demand. The delicacy of his position, at this moment, reduced him to an alternative no less painful than difficult.

England was just beginning to feel the beneficial effects of external peace, and internal tranquillity. The burdens that were already laid upon the people were as heavy as they could sustain, consistently with that repose from which they expected to reap the benefits of their industry. To enable the minister to engage in a continental war, fresh taxes must of necessity be imposed on the nation; and, as a general election was not far distant, the impolicy of such an experiment was obvious. If the interests of England were directly involved in the war, there might be some hope of reconciling it to public opinion; but to plunge the country into a war for the ostensible purpose of giving a king to Poland — a matter in which Great Britain was in no way concerned — could hardly produce any other result than to annihilate the popularity of the government. These reasons appeared to Walpole sufficient to decide the question in the negative. On the other hand, the earnest wishes of the king, and the sacred pledges of a treaty, claimed the most serious consideration. He extricated himself from the dilemma by temporising with the difficulties it presented.

The answer to the emperor, without positively refusing to assist him, evaded the demand by suggesting a middle course. It imported that the king of England regretted the events that had taken place; that he had employed his best offices to prevent the rupture, and would use all possible means to bring matters to an amicable accommodation; that as hostilities had arisen solely out of the affairs of Poland, in which his majesty had taken no part except that of peaceful mediation, his responsibility to participate in the quarrel was by no means clear; that although he was always ready to fulfil his promises, and to testify his particular friendship for the emperor, he must yet be satisfied that the demand for succours was founded on positive engagements before he involved his people in a war; and that, therefore, he must carefully examine the allegations on both sides, and consult his allies, and put

himself in such a position as would enable him to provide for his own security and the execution of his engagements.

This answer was exactly calculated to obtain all that Walpole required — time to make his arrangements, and to postpone the issue, however it might eventuate, until he had secured his majority in the approaching election. In the mean while, preparations were quietly set on foot for augmenting the land forces.

The emperor was indignant at the treatment he received, and failing to procure the assistance of his ally by an appeal to his justice, he endeavoured to gain him by a stratagem. Well knowing the aversion of England to a marriage between an archduchess and a prince of the house of Bourbon, he artfully affected to renew the negotiation with Spain for the marriage of his second daughter with Don Carlos. The necessity for this alliance was strongly urged upon the British cabinet by the imperial ambassador, who represented in the strongest language the imperative obligation under which the emperor was placed of complying with the demands of Spain, unless England came to his assistance in the very next campaign, which must otherwise terminate in the destruction of the house of Austria and the equilibrium of Europe. But Walpole penetrated the deception; and the minister at Vienna was instructed to state that even if it should appear that the emperor's claim of succours was well-founded, there were several reasons why it was impossible for the king of England to assist him as early as he expected; and that, as to the marriage of the archduchess, the king no longer opposed it since it seemed to be the only means left for retrieving the emperor's affairs: but that due precautions must be taken for preserving the liberties of Europe; one of the most effectual securities of which was the marriage of the eldest archduchess to the duke of Lorraine, under the guarantee of Spain.

To these explanations the emperor returned a haughty and angry reply, declaring his determination to support

his cause by the force of arms, and threatening to carry the war into Flanders, by attacking France on the side of Luxemburg.

In the midst of these contentions, the last session of the parliament opened on the 17th of January. His majesty was careful to announce in his speech that he was in no ways engaged in the war carrying on against the emperor; that the occasion required more than ordinary prudence and circumspection, and that he had therefore thought it proper to take time to consider the measures that would be most likely to conduce to the common safety. In the mean while he recommended that, as all Europe was preparing for arms, England should put herself in a posture of defence. Such was the unchangeable policy of Walpole. He constantly predicted that the crown of England would be fought for on British ground, and he seems to have invariably shaped his plans to meet such an emergency; averting the danger he dreaded by being always prepared to encounter it.

The motion on the address, as usual, produced a violent discussion, and ended in acquiescence. The tactics of the opposition in this session were formed by Bolingbroke, and conducted with consummate ability by sir William Wyndham, who, speaking upon almost every question of importance, distinguished himself by the energy, variety, and courage he displayed.

Foreign affairs appearing to present the most vulnerable points for attack were first assailed, and several attempts were made to implicate the administration in the war of the allies; but, foiled in all their efforts, the opposition abandoned the subject, and addressed all their strength to domestic questions. They opened the siege by endeavouring to revive the clamour about the excise, insinuating that the minister only waited a favourable opportunity to resume his obnoxious project. Walpole met them with a distinct disclaimer, that set all doubts at rest:— "I, for my part," he exclaimed, "assure this house, I am not so mad as ever again to engage in any thing that looks like an excise, though, in my own private opinion,

I still think it was a scheme that would have tended very much to the interest of the nation."

The standing army, as on all former occasions, led to a debate of great exasperation, argued, however, with more than ordinary heat and animation. The shape in which this perpetual source of strife was brought forward by lord Morpeth, immediately after the mutiny bill had been disposed of, was remarkable for its novelty and its inconsistency with the principles professed by its mover and supporters. Having expounded, in his introductory speech, the dangers arising from the maintenance of a military force under the control of the crown, his lordship concluded by moving for a bill to "secure the constitution by preventing officers not above the rank of colonels from being deprived of their commissions, otherwise than by judgment of a court-martial, or by an address of either house of parliament." The main argument on which this motion rested was the risk of arbitrary power in which the country was placed by having a large standing army completely at the disposal of the sovereign, and the consequent necessity of rendering it independent of all authority except that of parliament. The substance of the arguments on the other side exposes very satisfactorily the self-contradiction of such a measure emanating from a party whose professed object was the defence of the liberties of the people. It was urged in reply, that the great danger to be guarded against in all armies was the danger of making them independent; that the most important of all restraints on the military was the prerogative vested in the crown of displacing officers on suspicion; but that should such power be once transferred to the army, the period would not be far distant when the whole constitution would be at its mercy; that at present the army was dependent on the crown and parliament; but if officers were to possess a permanent interest in their commissions, the crown and parliament would speedily become dependent on the army; that the bill would open a door for the com-

mission of every species of military licence and oppression; and that should a reduction of the army at any future period be determined upon, it could not under such circumstances be effected. Walpole observed that if the motion passed into a law, the government of England would have an irresistible tendency to a *stratocracy* *, or military constitution. He instanced the case of an ambitious general aspiring to perpetuate his authority, and to rise above all control; and illustrating the case with the name of the duke of Marlborough, he showed how such a bill would facilitate the daring projects of such a man. If an officer should resolve to oppose in every thing the measures of the government, he maintained that it was the duty of the minister to advise the king to cashier him. It was by the prerogative which the king possessed of removing any officer he pleased that he was enabled to execute the laws, and preserve the peace of the kingdom: if a wrong use were made of that prerogative, his ministers were accountable for it to parliament; but it could not be taken from him, nor diminished without destroying the constitution. These arguments were decisive; and the motion was negatived, without even being carried to a division.

On the same day on which this motion was thrown out of the commons, a bill of similar import was presented to the house of lords by the duke of Marlborough; and after a debate, in which lord Scarborough, who with great magnanimity resigned his office of master of the horse, in order to place his vote above suspicion, especially distinguished himself, it was also rejected without a division.

Defeated on the general question, the opposition demanded a personal inquiry, moving simultaneously in both houses for an address to his majesty, requesting that he would graciously inform the parliament by whose

* This phrase was afterwards employed with memorable effect by Grattan in the Irish parliament.

advice he had been pleased to discharge the duke of Bolton and lord Cobham, and what crimes were alleged against them. If the former motion was an open attack on the prerogative of the crown, this motion assailed the prerogative by a side-wind; but there was this very important difference between them, that the former aimed at the destruction of the prerogative, while the latter merely proceeded upon the legitimate right of parliament to inquire into the grounds upon which the prerogative had been exercised in a particular instance. Walpole, however, who had admitted this right in the previous debate, was by no means disposed to indulge his opponents with a practical illustration of the theory he had himself set up, and maintained a strict silence. The "question" was called as soon as the mover and seconder, Sandys and Pulteney, sat down: sir William Wyndham in vain endeavoured to provoke ministers into a discussion; and the "question" being called again, the motion was thrown out by a majority of 59. It was also negatived in the lords.

A more popular measure was next attempted, the revival of a bill that had excited much discussion in king William's reign, securing the freedom of parliament by limiting the number of officers (civil and military) in the house of commons. The number was left blank in the bill, to be filled up at the discretion of the house. It was urged on the side of ministers that a sufficient security against placemen was afforded by that parliamentary provision which requires a re-election when a member accepts a place. On the other hand, the evil complained of had grown to such excess that it obviously demanded some restriction; for it was not to be dissembled that a house of commons including so many placemen gave an undue preponderance to the minister. The bill, however, was treated with that convenient levity which affords so easy an escape from argument; and, although it was supported by several votes drawn from the ministerial ranks by the necessity of propitiating the

constituents at the general election, it was lost by a small majority.*

The whole policy of the opposition throughout the session was to bring the government into public odium at this crisis, on the eve of their appeal to the country. Walpole detected and exposed their tactics at the very opening of the session; and the variety of motions they afterwards poured in upon both houses, with the perfect knowledge beforehand that they must fail, accurately fulfilled the predictions of the minister. "It is usual," said that sagacious statesman, "for some people to make motions rather to fix unpopular things on others, than to have any information for themselves: they make motions in order to make a figure in the votes, which are sent to all parts of the nation, and to serve some particular ends of their own. When a negative is put upon any such motion, they are then ready to cry out, 'We would have relieved you, we would have extricated you from all the difficulties you labour under, but we were by power denied the means of doing it.' This is a piece of management, it is a sort of parliamentary play, which has always been practised by those who oppose the measures of the administration: I remember it as long as I remember parliaments, and have by my own experience been acquainted with it: I can remember motions made with no other view but to have a negative put upon them; and, particularly at the beginning of a session, the language of such gentlemen has always been, 'We must give them no rest, but make motion after motion: if they agree in any motion we make, it will distress them; and if they put a negative upon every one, it will render them odious among the people.' This, I say, has been always the common practice of those who are resolved, at any rate, to oppose the adminis-

* Coxe says that Walpole did not speak in the debate, contenting himself with giving a silent vote. This is a mistake into which that assiduous and accurate historian seems to have been led by Chandler, who omits the latter half of the debate in his "History and Proceedings of the House of Commons." Walpole's speech is reported in full in Cobbett's "Parliamentary History, vol. ix. pp. 388, 389.

tration." And, it may be added, that it has continued to be the common practice to the present day.

But the grand battle of the opposition was reserved for an attempt to repeal the septennial act. In this great popular motion, supported by the nation out of doors, and fortified by justice, the principal speakers at both sides put forth their whole strength. The most remarkable speeches were those of Wyndham and Walpole. The former drew an imaginary character of a minister in whose hands the honour of the country had become tarnished, who had possessed himself of immense wealth, the spoils of the people, and whose conduct was screened from investigation by a corrupt majority; and, connecting with this picture the portrait of a prince unacquainted with the interests or inclinations of his people, weak, capricious, and actuated at once by the passions of ambition and avarice, he demanded, could any greater curse befal a country than the combination of such a minister, such a parliament, and such a prince? Walpole replied by drawing the character of an anti-minister, who considered himself the only person capable of conducting the affairs of the nation, and who succeeded in gaining over to his side some persons of fine parts and others of malignant dispositions, who were constantly uttering the venom he infused into them: he supposed such an anti-minister to be in a country where he ought not to be, and where he could have been only by an act of mercy, yet labouring with all his arts to destroy the fountain from whence that mercy flowed; he supposed him contracting friendships with the ambassadors of princes who were at enmity with his own; then endeavouring to procure, through his creatures in parliament, secrets prejudicial to his native country for their use, and, in case of failure, disseminating alarms through the nation that a wicked minister and corrupt majority refused the materials to enable justice to be done to the people; he further supposed this minister to have travelled, and at every court to have betrayed the secrets of the courts he had previously visited, desti-

tute of all faith and honour, and betraying every master he had ever served. The effect of this philippic was electrical. The majority of those whigs who had consented to be made the instruments of Bolingbroke's revenge became ashamed of the alliance, and abandoned him. Even Pulteney was so alarmed at the fatal consequences of his unpopularity, that he advised him to go into retirement; a piece of advice which Bolingbroke adopted as soon as the result of the ensuing general election developed a large majority for the minister, and proved to him that all chance of his restoration to power, or even of a seat in the lords, was at an end. "My part is over," he observed in a letter to Wyndham; "and he who remains on the stage after his part is over deserves to be hissed off."

The motion was negatived by a majority of 247 against 184, and the hopes of the opposition for that session were annihilated. The ministry, exposed to incessant harassing attacks, were in every instance triumphant; and the king dissolved the parliament, on the 18th of April, in a speech in which the constitutional rights of the crown and the people were very plausibly described as being mutual and inseparable. A new parliament was immediately convoked by royal proclamation.

Extraordinary efforts were made by both parties during the elections. The breach of faith towards Austria was branded as an act of infamy; and the Austrian ambassador, acting on the policy that had been attempted on several occasions before, during the present and the former reign, plotted with the opposition, and appealed to the people against the king. The emperor carried his resentment so far as to conspire for the removal of Walpole, and employed an emissary at the court of London, for the purpose of endeavouring to sow dissensions in the cabinet and the palace. Even the king was so displeased, that queen Caroline had considerable difficulty in averting his serious anger from sir Robert Walpole, by ingeniously casting the censure upon Horace Walpole, to whose councils she affected to attribute the inactivity

of England. Notwithstanding the pressure of these circumstances, however, the minister persevered in his pacific course throughout the recess, laying great stress upon the necessity of obtaining the concurrence of the states-general, hitherto supine and vacillating; and he succeeded so far as to secure the emperor's consent to the articles of a secret convention, which would have terminated the war but for the insincerity of cardinal Fleury, whose fundamental principle at this period was to separate England from the states-general. It soon became evident that hostile preparations could no longer be delayed with safety; and Walpole gradually and with reluctance yielded to the conviction.

Enormous sums were expended in the elections. Walpole is said to have contributed no less than 60,000*l.* out of his private fortune.* The issue was, on the whole, favourable to the ministry; but a few votes were lost,
1735. Parliament assembled on the 14th of January; and the king's speech alluded to the plan that had been formed as the basis of a general negotiation, suggesting, at the same time, the urgent necessity of maintaining a posture of defence. The opposition appeared in unusual strength, and several amendments were moved, and argued with ability in both houses; but the ministerial party defeated their opponents in the upper house with a majority of fifty, and in the lower with a majority of eighty.

The business of the session was for the most part destitute of public interest, producing few debates, and none that affected the administration. The subsidiary treaty with Denmark was approved; and in the committee on the supply, not, however, without a severe struggle, 30,000 seamen were voted, and it was agreed that the army should be augmented to the number of 25,744 effective men. The king prorogued the session on the 15th of May, and went to Hanover, leaving the regency in the hands of the queen during his absence.

A new source of disturbance occurred at this time on

* Etough.

the continent, which threatened to increase the difficulty of bringing about an arrangement amongst the European powers. It arose from a frivolous dispute about the privileges of the Portuguese minister resident at the court of Madrid. Some of that minister's servants, having been accused of assisting in the rescue of a malefactor, were arrested and carried to prison. This circumstance was treated as an infraction of the law of nations, and strong remonstrances were made against it. On the other side, the Spanish ambassador resident at Lisbon was instructed to demand satisfaction for the intemperance of the Portuguese minister, but instead of obtaining redress, nineteen of his servants were seized and imprisoned. There was at once a breach between the two courts. The ministers severally returned home, and both countries prepared for instant hostilities.

In this extremity, Portugal, unable to cope with the superior power of Spain, applied for assistance to England —entangled on all sides, as the tories too truly asserted, in treaties and engagements. As England derived great commercial advantages from her alliance with Portugal, the demand was immediately complied with, and sir John Norris was sent to the Tagus with a powerful fleet. It must have seemed inexplicable to Austria that England should have refused to aid her on the ground that Great Britain was not concerned in the succession to the throne of Poland, and that she now came forward to assist Portugal in a quarrel about an ambassador's servants. But the inconsistency was in some measure diminished by the strict instructions that were given to sir John Norris not to act offensively against Spain, but simply to protect the trade of English subjects, and to defend the coast and commerce of Portugal. The demonstration was fortunately sufficient for all purposes; and Spain, although she complained bitterly of the partial conduct of England, agreed to a convention in July, which was soon afterwards followed by a treaty of peace.

Throughout the whole of this period the negotiations were continued between England and the courts of

Vienna, Paris, and Madrid. The great object of Walpole was to detach the allies, and to effect a separate pacification. It required consummate address, and inflexible resolution in resisting the appeals of the emperor, to enable him to effect this object. The duplicity of cardinal Fleury, and the jealousy of Spain, perpetually thwarted him in the progress of his plans, which were still further embarrassed by the rage and despair of the emperor, whose anxiety at last became so overwhelming, that apprehensions were gravely entertained lest the conflict might shake his reason. His reproaches against England were dictated under an impression that the dismemberment of his empire was inevitable; and even Prince Eugene was so convinced of the impossibility of preserving it, that he thought the wisest course would be to recall the imperial troops into the hereditary dominions, and leave the rest to France, unless the maritime powers promptly interposed. To such a height of frenzy was the Austrian cabinet worked, that count Sinzendorft exclaimed, that the refusal of England to fulfil her engagement was the death-warrant of the emperor. "No malefactor," he said, "was ever carried with so hard a doom to the gibbet." He was for taking revenge on a comprehensive scale, beginning with the burning of Amsterdam. "There is and there shall be," said this impetuous counsellor, "no separate negotiation. The only means left for the emperor is to set fire to the four corners of the world, and to perish, if he must perish, in the general conflagration."

Yet a separate negotiation was effected notwithstanding. The aim of the English minister was to make it the interest of France to co-operate in his efforts for the restoration of tranquillity, by candidly agreeing to such conditions as would justify cardinal Fleury in deserting Spain, and making a separate accommodation with the emperor. The only terms upon which France could be induced to enter into this arrangement were the exchange of Lorraine for Tuscany, to be proposed and executed by the interference of England. Having

ascertained this to be the secret view of the French cabinet, the next step was to procure the consent of the emperor. The plan was accordingly laid before him, and his reply was distinguished by a tone of candour which conferred dignity upon his misfortunes. He declared himself grateful for the friendship of the king of England, and said, that although in a similar case he would not have withheld real succours, yet he was willing to believe that the disappointment, however fatal to himself and his family, was unavoidable; that he would pay all imaginable deference to the advice now communicated; but that, as the exchange did not wholly depend on himself, he would consult his council before he bound himself by a promise to agree to it.

In the mean while hostilities were actually, though not avowedly, suspended on the Rhine, and the negotiations proceeded through a variety of obstacles. The ministers of Spain, irritated at the rumoured secession of France, did not hesitate to accuse that power of treachery, and don Patinho (a statesman of whom Fleury said that he always spoke as well as wrote in cipher), went so far as to propose that the French commerce with Spain should be by some overt means impeded and stopped. "Thus we shall," he observed, "revenge ourselves upon the cardinal in the most easy and effectual manner, and kill him with a staff of cotton." Walpole took prompt advantage of these querulous humours, and by his adroit diplomacy effectually rendered the breach irreparable.

The result of these prolonged and complicated negotiations was the signature of preliminaries for a general pacification. So unexpected a triumph of statesman-like intrigue astonished even the sceptic Bolingbroke, who declared, that "if the English ministers had any hand in it, they were wiser than he thought them; and if not, they were much luckier than they deserved to be." *

The terms of the preliminaries were universally ad-

* Lord Hervey to Horace Walpole.

mitted to be just and honourable to all parties; and thus, by a steady perseverance in a pacific course of policy, against even the wishes of the king, and amidst the distraction of a divided cabinet, Walpole effectually restored tranquillity to Europe.

CHAP. X.

1736—1738.

PROCEEDINGS IN PARLIAMENT. — TUMULTS OCCASIONED BY THE GIN ACT. — THE KING GOES TO HANOVER. — FOREIGN POLICY OF WALPOLE. — SERIOUS RIOTS IN EDINBURGH. — DEBATES UPON THEM IN BOTH HOUSES. — BILL OF PAINS AND PENALTIES AGAINST THE PROVOST AND CORPORATION. — FURTHER ALIENATION OF THE SINKING FUND. — PROPOSAL TO REDEEM THE SOUTH-SEA ANNUITIES NEGATIVED. — MOTION TO INCREASE THE ALLOWANCE TO THE PRINCE OF WALES. — DRAMATIC CENSORSHIP ESTABLISHED. — DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE KING AND THE PRINCE. — DECLINING POPULARITY OF MINISTERS. — DEATH OF THE QUEEN. — SPANISH DEPREDATIONS IN THE WEST INDIES. — EFFORTS OF THE OPPOSITION TO REDUCE THE STANDING ARMY AND TO PRECIPITATE A WAR. — GREAT PUBLIC EXCITEMENT. — ENERGETIC PROCEEDINGS CONCERNING SPAIN. — INCREASING DIFFICULTIES OF THE MINISTRY. — PUBLICATION OF THE DEBATES PROHIBITED. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION. — CONVENTION WITH SPAIN SIGNED AT MADRID.

PARLIAMENT assembled on the 15th of January. The speech from the throne produced a sentiment of unanimity that was rare in those times. The settlement of Europe was a subject of congratulation above the reach of party rancour; and the opposition acknowledged in silence the wisdom of the measures pursued by the administration. The address passed both houses without a division.* 1736.

The same acquiescence in the ministerial policy, in reference to foreign affairs, was observed with scarcely a solitary interruption, to the end of the session; and

* The account of the debates in the "Parliamentary History" commencing with this year takes the form, generally, of a compilation of the arguments employed on both sides, rather than a report of the speeches of the members, with a few exceptions. Up to the year 1735, the debates were reported with sufficient regularity in a publication called the "Political State;" but after that time the speeches were given in the "Gentleman's" and the "London" Magazines; and from those periodicals the editor of the "Parliamentary History" derived his materials.

the influence of the government was so decisive, that even upon domestic questions not one attempt was made by the opposition to embarrass the minister. The principal business that occupied the attention of parliament was a motion for the repeal of those clauses in the test act which excluded protestant dissenters from civil offices. Walpole opposed this motion from political necessity. He was afraid of the cry of "The church in danger!" and yielded to the debasing superstition of the age. But he endeavoured to balance this piece of intolerance by supporting a bill for the relief of the quakers, who complained bitterly of the legal persecutions to which they were exposed, for their conscientious refusal to pay tithes. This bill passed the commons, but was thrown out of the lords, where the church and the law coalesced to expel a measure, which, however just in principle, was injurious to the pecuniary interests of both.

A better spirit was manifested in the repeal of the ancient statutes against conjuration and witchcraft, which up to this time continued to darken with their absurdity the judicial code of the country; nor ought it to be omitted, to the honour of the legislature, that no movement whatever was made to repress the progress of methodism, which at this period started into life under the auspices of Whitfield and Wesley, and spread rapidly amongst the people. Those celebrated founders of the sect known generally by the name of Methodists, were regularly ordained priests of the English church, the former adopting the Calvinistic, the latter the Armenian dogmas; under which divisions they drew great multitudes after them; preaching in the fields, enduring much ridicule and vulgar persecution, and persisting in their spiritual mission with an enthusiasm rarely paralleled, but not free from that extravagance which is usually regarded as the type of fanaticism. The early exhibitions of these energetic labourers in the cause of religious independence attracted so much notice, and provoked such animadversions, that the

government was frequently urged to adopt some severe measures for checking the diffusion of their opinions. But all suggestions of that nature were firmly resisted. The latitude of judgment allowed by the church of England was felt to be wholly irreconcilable with enactments for prohibiting the exercise of a right which was expressly asserted and triumphantly vindicated in its own constitution; and, although this right has been too often violated by the heads of the church, it never can be set aside, without destroying the vital principle of the reformed faith.

The tranquillity of the parliament at this period was strongly contrasted with the turbulence of the lower classes, who broke out into tumults in reference to a tax upon spirituous liquors, which was imposed with a view to check the consumption of those inflammatory poisons. The extreme severity of the bill, instead of producing the effect contemplated by its authors, led to the clandestine sale of gin to a greater extent than if it had been sold openly. The natural desire to procure the forbidden enjoyment carried the people into the wildest excesses, terminating in frauds and riots; which, as Walpole predicted, forced his successors to modify an enactment that increased the evil it was intended to abolish.

The prorogation of parliament took place on the 20th of May, when his majesty acquainted both houses that a convention concerning the execution of the preliminary articles between Austria and France had been communicated to both courts, and that negotiations were in progress to settle the general pacification. He then announced his intention to visit Germany, now grown into an annual custom, leaving the queen, as before, at the head of the administration during his absence.

Three distinct objects occupied his majesty's attention while he remained in Hanover: — the settlement of the succession to Berg and Juliers, which, the reigning line being on the eve of extinction, was contested by

the king of Prussia and the prince palatine of Sultzbach; — the formation of a league between the maritime powers and Sweden and Denmark; — and the mediation between Russia and the Porte. His majesty was strongly in favour of taking a direct part in these proceedings; Walpole was opposed to all interference on the part of England. The skilful management of the minister was, perhaps, never more conspicuous than in the elaborate correspondence that ensued, by which he completely succeeded in dissuading the king to abandon his designs, which would have had the inevitable effect of entangling England in fresh engagements, without holding out any prospect whatever of national advantage.

The riots, in the mean while, rose to an alarming height in London, and the agitation they produced was considerably increased by disturbances amongst the weavers in Spitalfields, in consequence of the employment of a number of Irish artisans, who, satisfied with a low rate of wages, provoked the vengeance of the regular hands by thus reducing the market value of labour. But the anxiety excited by these circumstances was suddenly diverted to another quarter by an outrage of a very remarkable kind, which demanded the prompt and vigorous interference of the government.

It happened that one Wilson, a smuggler, was sentenced to be hanged at Edinburgh for a robbery he committed on the collector of customs. Having exhibited extraordinary courage and presence of mind in abetting the escape of a fellow-prisoner from the midst of his guards during divine service, the magistrates considered it necessary to increase the precautions for his execution, by ordering into attendance the train bands and city guards to prevent a rescue. When the execution was over, the magistrates retired; and at that moment, the populace rushed towards the gallows to cut down the body. In the disorder that ensued, the military were attacked with stones; and captain Porteous, the commandant, was insulted, and struck re-

peatedly. Provoked at the outrage, he unfortunately ordered the soldiers to fire: five persons were killed, and several wounded. For having proceeded to extremities without an order from the civil magistrates, Porteous was tried and condemned to death; but in consequence of the mitigating circumstances that entered into the case, the queen-regent sent down a respite of six weeks, to afford time for an ample investigation into the whole facts. The populace of Edinburgh, however, highly incensed with Porteous, and urged to violence, it is suspected, by persons in a superior station of life, forced the prison of the Tolbooth on the evening of the day originally destined for his execution, and dragging the prisoner into the Grass Market, hung him on a dyer's cross post, close to the common place for the execution of delinquents. This act of savage ferocity was planned with such vigilance, and carried into effect so rapidly, that the multitude was enabled to disperse quietly before the aid of the military could be called in. A reward of 200*l.* was offered by proclamation for the detection of the perpetrators, but the compact amongst them was too close to be penetrated.

This affair engrossed a large space in the debates of 1737. parliament which opened on the 1st of February. Both houses expressed their abhorrence of the tumults that had taken place in London and Edinburgh, and proffered their hearty support to the royal authority for the maintenance of the public peace. The legislative proceedings that were founded upon the murder of Porteous are memorable for their unprecedented severity, marking emphatically the horror with which the outrage was regarded in England. A parliamentary inquiry was ordered in the first instance. Lindsay, the member for Edinburgh, the provost, and civil magistrates, the commander-in-chief of the forces, and three Scotch judges, were examined separately at the bar; and although it appeared that the magistrates were not sufficiently active in preventing or suppressing the riot, no legal evidence was obtained sufficient to convict

them, nor could the outrage be traced to any single person concerned in it. Notwithstanding this deficiency of proof, however, such was the indignation of the lords that a bill of pains and penalties was brought in against the provost and city, by which the former was to be imprisoned and incapacitated from holding any civil employment, the guard of the city was to be abolished, and the Netherbow gates, which had been closed by the mob to prevent the entrance of the soldiers, were to be taken away. It was even suggested by lord Carteret that the city had forfeited its charter —a proposition too monstrous to be seriously entertained.

The bill was strenuously opposed by all the Scotch peers, who truly argued that the existing laws were fully adequate to meet the case, and that the bill was iniquitous in principle, since it proposed to punish a whole community for offences which were within the reach of the inferior courts of justice. Some grave doubts, also, were urged as to whether the infliction of such penalties did not involve a direct violation of the articles of union. So bold and vigorous was the opposition that the bill was committed by a majority of only six votes. Fresh debates took place on each reading; and in one instance it was carried merely by the casting vote of the chairman of the committee. The resistance in the commons was even more vehement than in the lords; and at length the most obnoxious clauses were rejected, and the bill was reduced to an act simply disabling the provost from holding any office under government, and imposing a fine on the corporation of 2000*l.* for the benefit of the widow of Porteous. In this amended form it was agreed to by the lords. A second bill was also passed, containing extraordinary provisions for the detection of the murderers; and it was ordered for a stated time to be read to the people from the pulpits. Both measures produced a feeling of universal indignation in Scotland, where they were regarded by all classes as inflicting a deep wound on the

national honour. The immediate effect they produced was to ensure the return at the next election of a majority of Scotch members on the side of the opposition.

Early in March, Walpole, following out his plan of evading taxation by the appropriation of the sinking fund, proposed in the committee of supply that one million should be taken from the sinking fund, and applied to the redemption of a million of old South Sea annuities. This motion was warmly opposed, but eventually carried; when sir John Barnard moved for a bill to enable his majesty to raise money either by the sale of annuities, or by borrowing at a rate of interest not exceeding three per cent., to be applied towards the redemption of the South Sea annuities. The professed object of this motion was to give ease to the people by enabling parliament to diminish the taxes. Walpole was greatly embarrassed by this proposal, which was strongly supported by the landed interest, and calculated to produce extensive and permanent benefits to the country. It was obvious that the government had no desire to liquidate the public debt; but that, on the contrary, they wished to perpetuate it, from a conviction that it added considerably to their influence and security. But, as this was a species of policy that could not be conveniently avowed, the motion was met by an ingenious amendment to include all the public creditors as well as the South Sea annuitants in the bill. The difficulty was to borrow money enough at so low a rate of interest to liquidate the whole, which amounted at that time to 47,866,596*l.* This difficulty, which seemed to render the scheme impracticable, induced the house to negative the proposal, which was all the minister wanted.

The supporters of the administration were placed in an awkward dilemma this session by a motion introduced by Pulteney for an address to the king, requesting that his majesty would be pleased to settle 100,000*l.* per annum out of the civil list revenues on the prince of

Wales, who in the preceding year had married the princes Augusta of Saxe Gotha. Ministers opposed the motion, on the ground that it was an encroachment on the king's prerogative, and it was thrown out by a majority of 30. The result was an entire alienation between the court and Leicester house. The prince was now completely thrown into the arms of the opposition. His resentment against the courtiers was unbounded, and not altogether unreasonable; since in the former reign his father when prince enjoyed an income of 100,000*l.* per annum out of a civil list of only 700,000*l.*, while his allowance out of a civil list of 800,000*l.* was only 50,000*l.* Many of those persons who held places under the government were unwilling to divide on this question, from a natural desire to keep on good terms with the heir to the throne, and his royal highness was consequently advised to apply to parliament for an additional grant of 50,000*l.*; but he refused, asserting "that the nation had already done enough for his family, and that he would rather beg his bread from door to door than be a further charge to them."

A bill for the reformation of the stage, commonly called the Play-house bill, was introduced this session, and hurried through both houses with a degree of haste which exposes the administration with which it originated to the suspicion of being desirous to avoid the discussion of its principle. By this bill it was enacted that all new dramatic pieces should in future be submitted to the inspection of the lord chamberlain, and none should be allowed to be acted except those that were sanctioned by his express licence. The increasing licentiousness of the stage was alleged in evidence of the necessity of this despotic measure, and a censorship was for the first time formally established in England over that department of literature which is addressed above all others to the affections, sympathies, and intelligence of the people.* The only opposition that appears

* Coxe maintains that this power was always resident in the lord chamberlain, and that the act of parliament under consideration merely restored

to have been offered to it was a single speech by lord Chesterfield, pregnant with noble sentiments and a

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to him the ancient authority he possessed before the appointment of the master of the revels. A variety of works might be cited to prove that this is an error, notwithstanding the array of authorities with which the biographer of Walpole endeavours to sustain his assertion. The powers, such as they were, originally exercised by the lord chamberlain, were loose and indefinite. He cannot be said at any period to have held a censorship. The master of the revels, an officer who inherited the functions of the lord of misrule (see *Warton's History of English Poetry*, passim), gradually usurped the privilege of superintending the morals of the stage; but it might be very easily shown that his authority was little better than nominal, and that he really had no means of enforcing it when, from any cause, he wished to oppress the players. His power, probably, was unlimited over the children of the revels, and, perhaps also, over the children of St. Paul's and the chapel; although it does not appear that, except upon personal grounds, he ever interfered with the choice of their entertainments. The licensing of plays was evidently a mere matter of form, or we should surely be enabled to trace some instances of arbitrary rejection. In queen Elizabeth's time, and even still later, there were companies of players retained by the nobility, in addition to the regular actors licensed and protected by the crown. The only authority to which any of them seem to have been subjected was that of the magistrates, who shut up their houses or imprisoned the players whenever they thought fit. Stowe, in his *Survey of London*, furnishes a curious instance of this, which took place in 1581. "Thus once," he says, "the lord treasurer signified to the lord-mayor to have these players of lord admiral and lord Strange prohibited, at least for some time, because one Mr. Tilney had for some reasons disliked them. Whereupon the mayor sent for both companies, and gave them strict charge to forbear playing till further orders. The lord admiral's players obeyed; but the lord Strange's, in a contemptuous manner, went to the Cross-Keys, and played that afternoon. Upon which the mayor committed two of them to the Compter, and prohibited all playing for the future, till the treasurer's pleasure was farther known." Now the Mr. Tilney referred to was at this very time master of the revels, a fact of which Stowe appears to have been ignorant; and, although he held his office under the direct authority of the privy council, who appointed two coadjutors in 1589 to assist him, it is quite clear from this statement that he possessed no real power over the players, and was obliged, when they offended him, to solicit the help of the lord mayor, through the intercession of the lord treasurer. Even this kind of influence waned by degrees, until at length the master of the revels became a cipher, and was heard of no more in connection with the stage. As to the lord chamberlain, upon whom a legal censorship was for the first time in England conferred by this bill, his name had been wholly omitted from all letters patent and instruments concerning dramatists and players from the time of Charles I. The assertion, therefore, that he "was still considered as possessing an absolute, though an undefinable authority over the stage," is utterly deficient in evidence of any sort; while, on the contrary, there is abundance of negative proof that he really possessed no authority whatever.

In the debate on this subject, one of the members, by way of showing the melancholy extent of the evil, stated that at the time there were no less than six theatres in London; upon which Coxe observes, that "the house being fully convinced of the necessity of the bill, leave was given to bring it in without a single dissentient voice." If any person, acquainted with the history of the English stage, had replied to this statement, it might have been shown that six theatres, instead of exhibiting an increase, presented a very remarkable falling off in the number of playhouses. So far back as the close of the sixteenth century there were nearly three times that number in London; and we find that from 1570 to 1629, there were no less than seventeen theatres built in the metropolis.

manly vindication of the liberty of the drama. "I regard this measure," said his lordship, "as of a very extraordinary and dangerous nature; as a restraint not on the licentiousness merely, but the liberty of the stage; and as tending to a still more dangerous restraint on the liberty of the press, which is intimately and inseparably connected with the general liberty of the subject. I affirm the laws, as they at present stand, to be sufficient for the purpose of diminishing seditious or immoral performances. The best, and indeed the only mode of avoiding public ridicule, is to avoid ridiculous and vicious actions; for the people will neither ridicule those they love and esteem, nor suffer them to be ridiculed. An administration destitute of esteem or respect among the people will be censured and ridiculed, nor will the severest edicts be found of force to prevent it. If we agree to the bill now before us, what shadow of excuse can be suggested for refusing to proceed a step farther, and to extend the prohibition to printing and publishing those dramas which are deemed unfit for public exhibition? Still political satires will appear under the title of novels, secret history, dialogues, &c.; but will you allow a libel to be printed or dispersed only because it does not bear the title of a play? Thus, from the precedent before us, we shall be gradually prevailed upon to revive a general imprimatur, and then adieu to the liberties of Great Britain!" The inconsistency of prohibiting, on the ground of immorality or sedition, the performance of a play which is permitted to be printed and published with impunity, is glaring and offensive to common sense. Besides, the remedy for all objectionable performances is obvious enough, and might be rendered still more accessible by legislation. A censorship of this nature is utterly irreconcilable with the constitution of England and the general freedom of her institutions. It prevents that appeal to public opinion which is the birthright of freemen, and transfers to an individual that right of judgment which properly, and, according to the spirit and nature of dramatic poetry, belongs to the

community at large. The drama is expressly designed for presentation to a large assemblage of persons, excited and moved by universal passions, and cannot be fairly and truly judged by a single mind in the coldness of isolated examination, apart from the impulses and accessories of the appropriate tribunal to which that form of composition is exclusively intended to be addressed. The censor sees nothing in a play but its words:—the grand ensemble, the concrete purpose, escapes his literal and uncongenial criticism.* He decides solely in reference to political and personal considerations; and the noblest works of genius are liable to be crushed by a dash of his pen, upon the most trivial suspicion of their application to the policy of the government or the minister of the day.† A measure so tyrannical in its character, and so completely opposed to the general liberality of his views, could hardly fail to shake the popularity of Walpole; and it may justly be considered

* The injurious effect of the censorship, in connection with the ruinous monopoly established by the patents, is abundantly evident in the subsequent decline of the stage. The lord chamberlain's power being circumscribed within certain limits, he cannot exercise it for any purpose, good or bad, beyond his own district; and the patents preclude the performance of the higher order of dramas everywhere throughout the metropolitan region, except in the houses of the patentees. By this ingenious combination of royal caprice and blind legislation, the lowest and worst forms of dramatic representations alone are permitted to be brought before the public, and the stage is debased and corrupted through the operation of those very enactments which were specially designed to restrain its licentiousness.

† Belsham, after quoting a passage from lord Chesterfield's speech, observes, that "the ill effects apprehended by this generous and patriotic nobleman have not, however, been as yet very apparent; and it must be acknowledged that in very few instances only does the invidious discretion vested by this bill in the lord chamberlain, seem to have been capriciously or improperly exercised." (*Hist. of Great Britain*, vol. iii.) Arguments of this description are amongst the curiosities of historical literature. It does not follow, because the censorship has not been always capriciously or improperly exercised, that therefore lord Chesterfield's apprehensions were not well founded; his objection was against the power conferred by the bill, which is in no way affected by the manner in which that power has been or may be hereafter exercised. But the most remarkable part of the argument is thrown into a note upon this very passage, in which Belsham having just told us that the ill effects dreaded by lord Chesterfield were not very apparent, says that "the 'Gustavus Vasa' of Brooke, the 'Mustapha' of Mallet, and the 'Edward and Eleonora' of Thomson, were amongst the number of the dramas rejected under the authority of this act." This, it must be allowed, is a convincing illustration of the moderation and propriety with which the "invidious discretion" was exercised. "Gustavus Vasa" was rejected, simply because it was pervaded throughout by an energetic spirit of liberty, and for the same reason the finest productions of the stage are at any moment exposed to a similar fate.

as one of the causes, however slight in itself, which led to the fall of his administration. It does not appear that it produced any sensation at the moment; but the intellect of the country brooded over the dangerous precedent, and held that statesman in aversion who was the first to establish a literary despotism in Great Britain.

The alienation between the king and the prince of Wales had now grown into a matter of notoriety, arising from the impetuous conduct of the latter in removing the princess, while she was in the pains of labour, from Hampton Court, where the royal family were then residing, to the palace at St. James's, where she was, on the same night, delivered of a daughter. The king regarded this proceeding as an act of intentional indignity, and sent a message to his royal highness desiring him to leave the palace. The same scene was re-enacted on this occasion that took place in the former reign; and while the ministry were holding their meetings at St. James's, the opposition, organised under the instructions of Bolingbroke, who kept up a constant communication with them through Wyndham, regularly assembled in council at the residence of the prince. Several overtures were made with a view to soften the resentment of the king; and the lord chancellor Hardwicke, deploring a breach which threatened the stability of his party, frequently interceded in the hope of bringing about a reconciliation. But his majesty's disposition was too stubborn and phlegmatic to be moved by promises and repentance, and he sternly refused not only to see the prince, but to admit into his presence any individuals who frequented his house.

The influence of the government rapidly declined under these disastrous circumstances. The activity exhibited by the members of the administration in opposing the claims of the prince produced a succession of able and galling attacks in the journals and pamphlets of the day; and Walpole considered them of sufficient consequence to demand a special refutation, which was undertaken by lord Hervey, assisted by the minister himself.

The prince's popularity increased in proportion as the power of the cabinet diminished; and the courteousness of his manner, and his patronage of literature and art, became favourite topics of general panegyric. It was in reference to the merits and claims of his royal highness that William Pitt delivered his first speech in parliament; an effort of eloquence which produced an extraordinary impression, and which is described by a contemporary historian as "being more ornamented than Demosthenes, and less diffuse than Cicero."*

But the event which, more than all others, contributed to hasten the removal of Walpole, was the death of the queen, his constant and judicious protector. This melancholy circumstance took place on the 20th of November. Her majesty had laboured for some time under a rupture; and, from a mistaken delicacy, irreconcilable with the general magnanimity of her character, she was so imprudent as to conceal the cause of her illness from her medical attendants, who, believing it to be gout in the stomach, subjected her to a course of treatment which unfortunately aggravated the malady. She bore her agonies for twelve days with exemplary patience and fortitude; and, aware that her end was approaching, calmly recommended her servants to the favour of the king. She frequently declared that she had made it the business of her life to discharge her duties conscientiously; that she was a hearty well-wisher to the liberties of the people; and that if she had erred in any part of her public conduct, it arose from want of judgment, not from defect of intention. Shortly before she died she asked the physician, "How long can this last?" and when he answered, "Your majesty will soon be eased of your pains," she observed, "The sooner the better." She then repeated a prayer of her own composing, full of devotion and natural eloquence; and finding her speech falter, she desired her attendants to sprinkle water upon her in the hope of soothing her pains. Her friends then, at her request, knelt round

* Tindal.

her and prayed aloud; and when the Lord's Prayer was concluded, she gently waved her hand and expired.

The tenderness manifested towards her by the king during her illness impressively marked his deep attachment to this admirable woman, whose memory he never ceased to cherish with unaltered affection. He continued to discharge her numerous list of benefactions, that nobody should be a sufferer by her death but himself; and, agreeably to her generous wishes, he renewed the salaries of all the officers of her household. Truly did his majesty exclaim, "I have never seen a woman worthy to buckle her shoe."

The prince of Wales was not admitted to her majesty during these closing scenes. The queen declared to sir Robert Walpole that she would have seen him with pleasure, but that prudence forbade the interview, as it might embarrass and irritate the king; but she sent his royal highness her maternal blessing, and a message of forgiveness. On her death-bed she testified her approbation of Walpole's measures; and, turning to him, she said she hoped he would never desert the king; then, pointing to his majesty, who was present, she added, "I recommend his majesty to you:" an expression of confidence which the minister feared would excite the king's jealousy, and produce an effect contrary to that contemplated by the queen. But the event proved otherwise; for, although subsequent events turned against Walpole, the king remained his friend. Some time afterwards, in a confidential interview with Horace Walpole, his majesty spoke of the inimitable virtues of his royal consort; observing, "that her presence of mind often supported him in trying times, and the sweetness of her temper and prudence would moderate and assuage his own vivacity and resentment; that incidents of state of a rough, difficult, and disagreeable nature, would by her previous conferences and concert with that able minister, sir Robert Walpole, be made smooth, easy, and palatable to him; but that he must now lead a helpless, disconsolate, and uncomfortable life, during the re-

mainder of a troublesome reign; that he did not know what to do, nor which way to turn himself." But then, recovering himself a little, he said, "As she never forgot her love and concern for me to the last moment of her days, she earnestly recommended it to me on her death-bed (and his majesty emphatically added that it was a just and wise recommendation) to follow the advice of sir Robert Walpole, and never to part with so faithful and able a minister. This (said the king) is now my only resource,—upon this I must entirely depend." *

Such was the character of the queen drawn by him who was best acquainted with her virtues. Yet even her justice, her prudence, and her active benevolence did not shelter her name from slander; and she who encouraged and protected the greatest men of her age, who rescued the humblest merit from obscurity, and infused her noble spirit into the councils of the state, was assailed in her grave by the envenomed satire of a malignant poet. † But history, which survives these revolting depravities, will vindicate her fame, and transmit her character in its full lustre to the remotest posterity.

The death of the queen inspired the opposition with renewed hopes. The ascendency of the minister had

* Horace Walpole's Apology.

† Pope; who, in his Epilogue to the "Satires," alludes in a tone of mocking irony to the absence of the prince of Wales from her death-bed, insinuating that, to the last, she refused him her blessing.

"Or teach the melancholy muse to mourn,
Hang the sad verse on Carolina's urn,
And hail her passage to the realms of rest,
All parts performed, and ALL *her children blest.*"

Warton accuses Pope of being the author of the following disgraceful couplet; and Coxe proves the authorship on the authority of lord Orford, who had it from lord Mansfield, to whom it was communicated by Pope himself.

"Here lies wrapt up in forty thousand towels,
The only proof that Caroline had bowels."

Yet the queen thus stigmatized was the kind and steady patroness of Clarke, Hoadley, Sherlock, Secker, and Pearce, all of whom she especially distinguished by her regard; the benefactress of all men of merit, without distinction of station or party; the preserver of Savage, for whom she procured a pardon after his condemnation, and supported with an annual pension; the liberal patroness who, in testimony of her reverence for the memory of Milton, bestowed favours on his grand-daughter; and obtained the recal of lord Lansdowne, and Carte the historian, amongst numerous acts of equal generosity and well-directed munificence.

been sustained chiefly by her majesty's unseen influence over the king, and now even Walpole himself despaired of guiding a temper so capricious and intractable. The continued depredations of the Spanish guarda-costas upon the ships and effects of British merchants in the West Indies put his power in the cabinet at once to the test, by forcing him into a position of unusual difficulty at the very moment of the queen's demise.

The history of these depredations presents a perplexing web of misunderstandings between the courts of Madrid and London; the former claiming, under certain treaties, the right of search in reference to all vessels that sailed near the American ports; and the latter insisting that such right was entirely dependant upon the violation by the vessels searched of the commercial regulations subsisting between the two countries. The Spaniards continued to seize and confiscate, and the English to remonstrate and protest; until at length the British merchants trading to the West Indies addressed the king, stating several specific cases of illegal captures, and intreating his majesty to take the whole subject into consideration. The petition was referred to the cabinet council; and the duke of Newcastle drew up a spirited memorial, showing the nature of the trade, and giving such an explanation of the disputed treaties on the due interpretation of which the affair ultimately rested, as appeared to justify the complaints of the English, and to criminate the Spaniards. This memorial was presented without loss of time to the king of Spain; but, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrances of the British minister at that court, the answer was not returned before the meeting of parliament. It was clear, however, that the Spanish cabinet took a very different view of the matter from that which had been advanced in the memorial.

1738. Parliament assembled on the 24th January. The speech from the throne was remarkable only for its unusual brevity. After recommending the despatch of business with prudence and expedition, it exhorted the

house to lay aside all heats and animosities. Addresses of condolence and attachment were voted by both houses, but the occasion was too tempting to be passed over with unanimity. Wyndham and Shippen threw out some significant hints that the minister might be assured he was not reposing on a bed of roses.

The object of the opposition was manifest. As it was Walpole's policy to preserve the peace of Europe at any cost; so his opponents now endeavoured, by magnifying the insults of Spain, to plunge the country into a war. The debate on the army estimates afforded them an early opportunity of displaying their factious spirit; but it committed them at the same time to a course of argument entirely at variance with their secret design of precipitating hostilities. Upon the motion for maintaining 17,400 men, they proposed an amendment that the army should be reduced to 12,000. This was their regular annual exhibition of patriotism; and as it enabled them to assail the ministry in a vulnerable point, and to keep up a little popularity on their own side, no considerations of political consistency could induce them to relinquish it. The dishonesty of a party that on the one hand tried to force the government into a declaration of war, and on the other laboured to reduce the military strength of the kingdom, was sufficiently glaring to provoke the contempt of all impartial men.

But it must be admitted, nevertheless, that on this occasion, as upon all similar motions, they advocated principles which, however irreconcileable with their real views, were consonant with the spirit of the constitution. Carefully suppressing all allusion to the irritating topic of Spanish depredations, they confined themselves strictly to the question of a standing army; and in a debate of great length pressed the ministry hard for an exposition of the grounds on which they persisted in the maintenance of so large a force in a time of peace, dwelling vehemently on the unpalatable truth that the whigs, who voted for the measure, must be denounced as deserters from the doctrines of their ancestors. Finding it impos-

sible wholly to evade these direct demands for an explanation which he was not prepared or willing to give, Walpole drew an artful distinction between an army composed entirely of British soldiers, commanded by gentlemen of family and property, and depending for its existence on the yearly consent of the legislature, and an army composed of mercenaries. He contended that such a force, instead of endangering the liberties of the subject, contributed effectually to protect them; then, reverting to the old plea, he endeavoured to identify the tories with the jacobites, and to show that as there was still a pretender to the throne whose claims agitated the discontented multitude, the undeniable necessity for a standing army continued in full force. But it could not be disguised that the true motive was to preserve the whigs in power; and colonel Mordaunt, one of the adherents of the ministry, less prudent than the rest, went so far as to avow that he "thought the keeping up an army absolutely necessary for supporting the whig interest; that in every dispute about the army of late years he looked upon the question to be, whether whig or tory should prevail; that if the army should be disbanded or very much reduced, the tory interest would prevail; and that if it were necessary to the support of the whigs, he would be for keeping up a standing army four times as numerous as that which was then on foot." * This very injudicious declaration drew a conclusive answer from the opposite side. "I am apt to suspect," said lord Polwarth, a whig of the old school, "that my honourable friend calls this the whig interest; and, if so, I shall readily agree with him that what he calls the whig interest, being what I call the tory interest, cannot be supported without a standing army. This may be a prevailing argument with him for being against any reduction; but it is an argument that has quite a different influence with me; for I think no interest, nor any party of men, ought to be supported, if a standing army becomes necessary for their support." †

* Chandler. Parl. Hist. † Ibid.

The last speaker in the debate was William Pitt. The substance of his arguments tended to show the urgent necessity of reducing the army for the sake of reducing the public burthens, and to prove that the existence of a standing force, instead of being calculated to suppress popular discontent, was the immediate cause by which it was generated and extended. How long this statesman continued to advocate these popular and economical doctrines, the annals of the present reign will subsequently testify.

The arguments of the opposition were, as usual, unavailing. The minister carried his point in both houses, triumphing in the commons with a majority of 85.

The Spanish question was now brought forward, and almost exclusively occupied the attention of parliament to the close of the session. The minority opened the attack by the presentation of several petitions from merchants and others, recapitulating the wrongs and indignities put upon British traders. These petitions were referred to a committee of the whole house; and sir John Barnard, who seems to have been recognised as the organ of the commercial interest, moved for an address to his majesty, praying for copies of all papers in the hands of government connected with the subject. This motion was opposed by Walpole, who proposed as an amendment to leave out that part of it which related to the answers of the king of Spain and the British minister at Madrid. He had no objection to furnish copies of all the instructions that had been sent out by the cabinet, and of all other documents in the possession of government, except those that involved the actual policy of the Spanish court. The pacific design of the amendment was distinctly avowed by the minister, who deprecated the imprudence of increasing the misunderstanding with Spain by interfering with the negotiations into which the king had entered for the purpose of endeavouring to reconcile the interests of the kingdom with its peace. Walpole's speech was remarkable for the temperance of its tone, and for the ingenuity with which

he calmly demonstrated that the love of country was not necessarily associated with violent councils and angry sensibility about the national honour. "Prudence and pusillanimity," he observes, "are two words which are easily understood in private life; but in public life, and in national affairs, it is not so easy to form proper ideas for these two words, and to determine the exact boundaries between them. If a private man should think his honour injured, he may—he ought to resent it immediately; because, as he has nothing but his own life to lose, his own opinion is a good and sufficient reason for putting it to the venture. But in national quarrels the lives of many thousands are concerned; and those who are to deliberate and determine in what manner, or how soon, an injury ought to be resented, are generally those whose lives, in case of a rupture, will be the last to be brought into danger. For this reason they ought not to depend so much on their own opinion; nor ought they to insist upon such punctilios as may be insisted on in private life." As to the brawling about the courage and the honour of the country, he thought that other nations had as good a right to set up similar claims to consideration. "It is without doubt," said he, "a very popular way of arguing to talk highly of the honour, the courage, and the superior power of this nation; and I believe I have as good an opinion of the honour, courage, and power of this nation as any man can, or ought to have; but other nations must be supposed to have honour as well as we, and all nations generally have a great opinion of their own courage and power." But he mainly rested the refusal to grant the whole papers upon the great inconvenience which would ensue to the public service from the interposition of parliament in the midst of a pending negotiation; an argument so just and cogent, that it made a deep impression upon the house. "As I do not oppose," he continued, "calling for any papers in which our administration can be supposed to have a concern, I hope what I have said will have the more weight. If I opposed calling for any papers that have been penned

or advised by any of our ministers, it might perhaps be suspected that my opposition proceeded from some selfish end, in order to prevent an inquiry into my own conduct, or into the conduct of some of my friends; but as I oppose calling for some of those papers only which have been penned and advised by the ministers of Spain, I cannot think my opposition will be liable to any such suspicion. I hope it will be thought that I have nothing but the good of my country in view. I really think; and I protest I speak it sincerely,—I say I really think it inconsistent with the interest of the nation to call for any papers so lately arrived as the last despatch which came from the court of Spain to this court. It may be attended with terrible consequences, not only in the case now before us, but in many future cases; because it will be a dangerous precedent for all future time to come. Who knows, sir, should we make a precedent of this, but that a future house of commons may assume to themselves a power of calling for papers during the dependence of a negotiation; and if this should ever come to be our case, I am sure no foreign prince or state will ever enter into any secret negotiation or treaty with our government, the consequences of which I shall leave to every gentleman to form to himself a notion of, for they are beyond what I can pretend to express." This sound constitutional appeal was entirely successful. The original motion was negatived by a large majority, and the amendment carried without a division.

The precaution of the minister, however, to prevent the substance of the communications of the Spanish court from being made known, proved ineffectual. Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, or, as he was generally called, Don Thomas Geraldino, the Spanish minister, imparted to the leaders of the opposition the heads of all the secret information that passed through his hands, and employed all the means in his power, by false representations and otherwise, to foment disturbances against the government. The sympathies of the nation were also strongly excited from day to day by the grievous petitions which

inundated both houses of parliament; and the testimonies given at the bar, by captains and seamen, of the cruelties and insults exercised by the Spaniards produced a sentiment of universal indignation, which rose rapidly into a loud demand for redress. One case in particular made a deep impression on the people, and helped more than any thing else to give effect to the eloquent remonstrances of the opposition. This was the case of one Jenkins, the captain of a trading vessel, who was said to have been boarded by a Spanish guarda-costa; when, after treating him with every species of indignity, the Spanish captain hung him up three times, once with the cabin boy at his feet; and then cutting or tearing off one of his ears, desired him to carry it to his king, and to tell his majesty that had he been present he should have been treated in the same way. Jenkins always carried his ear about with him, covered up with cotton, and by the exhibition of it no doubt inflamed the popular frenzy, already excited to an extravagant height. There is very little doubt that the facts of this case were greatly exaggerated; and one writer suspects that Jenkins had lost his ear on some other occasion, and merely pretended that it had been cut off by a guarda-costa.* But, however that may be, the story obtained currency in all the publications of the day, and produced such an effect on the public mind that Pulteney declared the very name of Jenkins would be sufficient to raise volunteers.

As it was impossible to deny the injuries which the British trade had suffered, the only course open to the administration was to sooth the rage of the opposition by adopting their views in a modified shape. Accordingly a series of resolutions moved by Pulteney in a speech of transcendent ability, were reduced at the instance of Walpole to a simple declaration of those maritime rights which had been contravened by Spain; and this declaration was afterwards thrown into the form of an address to his majesty, entreating him to

* Tindal.

use his endeavours to obtain effectual relief for his injured subjects; assuring him that in case his application proved fruitless, the house would effectually support his majesty in taking such measures as honour and justice should make it necessary for him to pursue. To this address his majesty returned an answer that gave an ample pledge of his determination to obtain redress for the many hardships and injuries sustained by his subjects.

The opposition, however, were not yet satisfied, and made one effort more to disturb and derange the negotiations of the minister. This was in the form of a bill, brought in by Pulteney, for securing and encouraging the trade to America; but which, in fact, amounted to a sinister declaration of war; and which, had it been carried, might have involved the country in general hostilities with the commercial nations of Europe. Walpole strenuously resisted it, and after an ardent debate, it was negatived by a large majority.

The only remaining subject of public interest which occupied the attention of parliament during this session was a resolution to enforce the standing orders of the house prohibiting the publication of debates, and extending that prohibition to the recess. In the early periods of the English parliament, the house was so jealous of publicity, that it was even customary for a member to rise daily in his place to request of the chair to ask permission of the house to have the votes for that day printed: this custom gradually ceased, and the votes came to be printed regularly without any such formal permission. But, latterly, the speeches of members were taken down, and published, chiefly in the magazines — a practice which, at first, obtained only in the recess, but which was, at last, followed up even while the house was sitting. It appeared that these reports were extremely inaccurate; and that they constantly, either through the wilfulness or carelessness of the reporters, misrepresented the sentiments of the members. Upon this ground, principally, the resolution

referred to was adopted. It was supported by all parties, and passed without a dissentient voice. Some vague professions of tenderness for the liberty of the press were uttered as a salve for this direct annihilation of one of its most important functions — professions which were falsified by the very proceeding that drew them forth. The resolution, however, was utterly ineffectual. The periodical publications, receiving a fresh impulse from the awakened curiosity of the public gave the debates even more elaborately than before, adopting the expedient of disguising them in a framework of fictitious titles, such as the "Senates of Lilliput and Brobdignag," or the "Debates of a Roman political Club." The evil, too, which the resolution was intended to repress, was thus seriously increased; for it was notorious that the reports of the debates were now even less authentic than before, in consequence, probably, of the increased impediments thrown in the way of the persons employed to compile them.

Parliament was prorogued on the 20th of May, and the remainder of the year was occupied by a succession of tedious efforts to adjust the differences with Spain. The resolutions of the house of commons were transmitted to the resident at Madrid, to be laid before the king of Spain. A squadron was sent to the Mediterranean, a few ships were ordered to the American coast, and the infant settlement of Georgia was supplied with means of defence against invasion.

At length, after much difficulty, an approach was made towards a mutual understanding; and Walpole, willing to make a pecuniary sacrifice, proposed a convention, by which the king of Spain was to bind himself to make reparation, at a reduced amount, for the loss sustained by British subjects, and commissioners were to be appointed for settling the disputed questions of trade, navigation, and territory. When this convention was formally submitted to the consideration of the court of Madrid, the Spanish minister stipulated for the payment of 68,000*l.*, which he asserted was due to his master by

the South-Sea company. It was urged in reply, that the debt was a private transaction, in which the government had no concern: but the minister was obstinate; and the English resident, knowing the eager desire of the British cabinet for an immediate accommodation, imprudently consented to the convention, clogged with a condition, that unless the company should agree to the payment of the demand within a certain time, the convention should be null and void. By this proceeding, however, ministers were enabled to meet parliament with a definite proposal, relying upon their influence to carry it through with success. The convention was hastily signed at Madrid, and arrived in London on the 15th of January, 1739.

CHAP. XI.

1739—1741.

OPENING OF PARLIAMENT. — VIOLENT OPPOSITION TO THE CONVENTION WITH SPAIN. — MINISTERS CARRY THE ADDRESS IN BOTH HOUSES. — PROTEST AND SECESSION OF WYNDHAM AND HIS FRIENDS. — DEATH OF WYNDHAM. — PROMOTION OF USEFUL MEASURES. — REPEAL OF THE TEST ACT NEGATIVED. — TREATY WITH DENMARK. — CLOSE OF THE SESSION. — FAILURE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS, AND DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST SPAIN. — INCREASING EMBARRASSMENTS OF WALPOLE. — PROGRESS OF THE WAR. — CAPTURE OF PORTO BELLO. — DISCOMFITURE AT CARTHAGENA. — SUCCESSES OF COMMODORE ANSON. — DISSENSIONS IN THE CABINET. — LAST SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENT. — SANDYS MOVES AN ADDRESS TO THE KING FOR THE REMOVAL OF WALPOLE. — DEBATED AND NEGATIVED IN BOTH HOUSES. — SUBSIDIES GRANTED TO THE QUEEN OF HUNGARY. — DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT. — COALITION OF THE TORIES AND DISCONTENTED WHIGS. — VIOLENT PROCEEDINGS AT THE ELECTIONS. — UNPOPULARITY OF WALPOLE.

1739. DURING these negotiations, the public mind was agitated by a variety of rumours, insidiously circulated by the war-party. The demands for redress became every day more exorbitant; and when the parliament assembled on the 1st of February the expectations of the people had attained a height which no reasonable concessions could satisfy.

The king's speech, referring in general terms to the recent convention, was by no means calculated to appease the popular frenzy; and while the address passed without a division in the lords, where greater temperance prevailed, it was opposed with ridicule and contempt in the commons. But the majority was still with the minister, who struggled against the tide that was tumultuously rising out of doors; and before the convention

came to be discussed in detail, succeeded in obtaining the requisite supplies for the service of the year. It was agreed but not without angry debates and divisions, that 12,000 seamen and 18,000 land forces should be employed.

The convention was first taken into consideration in the house of lords, where it met with a formidable resistance, headed by the prince of Wales; but was ultimately carried by a majority of 21, under a strong protest, signed by nine-and-thirty peers.

On the 7th of March it was introduced into the commons; and such was the eagerness of members to secure places, that upwards of a hundred seats were occupied before eight o'clock in the morning. The first two days were engaged in hearing West India merchants in support of their petitions, and in the examination of witnesses; and on the third day Mr. Horace Walpole moved an address confirmatory of the convention. The debate that ensued was distinguished by consummate ability, energy, and zeal. It was contended, on the one side, that the convention achieved the three great points that ought to be demanded in such an instrument; that it preserved the honour of the nation, obtained satisfaction for past injuries, and guaranteed security against future grievances. On the other side, it was urged, that it left the real question untouched, allowing Spain openly to insist upon her right of search*, since it was merely the differences arising out of the exercise of that pretended right, and not the right itself, to which the convention was addressed; that the undoubted privileges of England and the insolent pretensions of Spain were alike referred to the mediation of plenipotentiaries, as if they rested upon the same basis of equality; that if the ministers had acted upon the resolutions of the preceding session they must have obtained a decisive settlement, but that this convention was nothing more

* Walpole was so well aware of the pertinacity with which Spain asserted this right, that he considered it advisable to keep the word search altogether out of view in the resolutions he framed for the commons.

than a preliminary to an injurious and disgraceful treaty; that it was an illusive and ignominious expedient, at once insecure and abject; and that the expense of the commission which would be necessary to carry it into effect would exceed the sum demanded from Spain as an indemnification for the losses of the British merchants.* The whole question was thoroughly sifted; and although the acrimony of the opposition derived increased bitterness from the feelings of almost universal irritation they represented, it must be allowed that they conducted the debate with candour, taking less advantage of the clamour out of doors than might have been expected. Walpole's speeches were comprehensive in the scope of their matter, but his reasoning was rather that of a man who was temporising to gain a purpose, than of one who confided in the integrity of his cause. It must, at the same time, be observed, that in the violent temper of the times he was not at liberty to employ all the arguments that might have been advanced on his side. The house was not in a disposition to hear them, and the country was too highly excited to endure them. The general cry was "No search!" and so completely had this watchword taken possession of the multitude, that if the minister had ventured to allude to the illicit proceedings of the British traders, which led to, and in some degree justified, the conduct of the Spanish guardships, he would have drawn down a tempest of national odium, the consequences of which must have been fatal not merely to the administration but to the tranquillity of the kingdom.

Upon the division, the numbers were 260 for the address — 232 against it. The smallness of the majority in so numerous a house gave fresh confidence to the opposition; and the next day, when the report of the

* This charge was, unfortunately, too well founded. In the beginning of the negotiations with the Spanish ministers, the sum stipulated for the indemnification of the British merchants was 140,000*l.*; but being objected to by the Spanish government, it was reduced in the settlement of the convention to 95,000*l.*, and even that was subject to the deduction of the 8,000*l.* demanded on account of the South-Sea company.

resolution in committee was read, Pulteney proposed its recommitment, and was seconded by Wyndham. But this motion failed also, ministers obtaining a majority of 30.

This defeat was regarded by the principal members of opposition as a conclusive proof of the corrupt influence of the ministers; and a great part of the minority now resolved to carry into execution a project which seemed to have been formed during the progress of these discussions. This project was to secede from parliament, on the ground that they could no longer be of any service to their country in an assembly so servile and degenerate. The merit of having devised this extraordinary line of proceeding has been attributed to Bolingbroke; but to Sir William Wyndham—a man of lofty talents and inflexible resolution — belongs the distinction of having taken the lead in its execution. His speech on that occasion was in many points of view a very remarkable effusion.

"I have seen," he said, "with the utmost concern, this shameful, this fatal measure, approved of by a majority of but 28, and I now rise to pay my last duty to my country, as a member of this house. I was in hopes that the many unanswerable arguments urged in the debate against the convention might have prevailed upon gentlemen to have for once listened to the dictates of reason; for once to have distinguished themselves from being a faction against the liberties and properties of their fellow-subjects. I was the more in hopes of this, since in all the companies I have been in from the time this convention has been spoken of, I have not found one single person without doors pretend to justify it. Is it not strange, that the eloquence of one man should have so great an effect within these walls, and the unanimous voice of a brave suffering people without should have so little? I am surprised that I should be so blind as not to discern one argument that has the least appearance of reason, among all that has been offered, for our agreeing to this address. This must pro-

ceed either from the majority of this house being determined by arguments that we have not heard, or from my wanting common sense to comprehend the force of those we have heard. In the first case, I think I cannot, with honour, sit in an assembly which is determined by motives which I am not at liberty to mention; and if the last is the case, I look upon myself as a very unfit person to serve as a senator. I here, sir, bid a final adieu to this house. Perhaps when another parliament shall succeed, I may be again at liberty to serve my country in the same capacity. I therefore appeal, sir, to a future, free, uninfluenced house of commons. Let it be the judge of my conduct and that of my friends upon this occasion. Meantime, I shall conclude with doing that duty to my country I am still at liberty to perform, which is to pray for its preservation.

"May, therefore, that Power, which has so often, and so visibly interposed, in behalf of the rights and liberties of this nation, continue its care over us at this worst and most dangerous juncture, whilst the insolence of enemies without, and the influence of corruption within, threaten the ruin of her constitution!"

The impassioned way in which Wyndham delivered this speech was no less striking than the matter was unexpected. The minority maintained a deep silence; and the ministerial majority filled with indignation at the language in which they had been described, were divided between astonishment and rage. Pelham rose impetuously, and was about to move for the commitment of Wyndham to the Tower, but was restrained by Walpole, who, well aware of the disorders such a precipitate measure would produce in the country, spoke to the following effect: — "Sir, the measures which the gentleman who spoke last and his friends may pursue give me no uneasiness. The friends of the nation and the house are obliged to them for pulling off the mask, by making this public declaration. We can be upon our guard against open rebellion, but it is difficult to guard against secret traitors. The faction I speak of never

sat in this house, they never joined in any public measure of the government, but with a view to distress it, and serve a popish interest. The gentleman who is now the mouth of this faction was looked upon as the head of those traitors, who, twenty-five years ago, conspired the destruction of their country, and of the royal family, to set a popish pretender upon the throne. He was seized by the vigilance of government, and pardoned by its clemency; but all the use he ungratefully made of that clemency has been to qualify himself according to *law*, that he and his party may, some time or other, have an opportunity to overthrow all *law*.

"I am only afraid they will not be so good as their word, and that they will return; for I remember that, in the case of their favourite prelate *, who was impeached of treason, the same gentleman and his faction made the same resolution. They then went off like traitors as they were; but their retreat had not the detestable effect they expected and wished, and therefore they returned. Ever since, sir, they have persevered in the same treasonable intention of serving that interest, by distressing the government. But I hope their behaviour will unite all true friends of the present happy establishment of the crown in his majesty's person and family more firmly than ever; and that the gentlemen who, with good intentions, have been deluded into the like measure, will awaken from their delusions, since the trumpet of rebellion is now audaciously sounded."

There was, of course, much exaggeration in this, which must be attributed to the heat of a collision, in which political differences took such angry shapes of personality. It was true that Wyndham had been arrested in common with the earl of Jersey, lord Lansdowne, and others, shortly after the accession of George I.; but there was no reason to suppose that since that time he had held any correspondence with the pretender. His subsequent conduct in parliament expiated the errors of his early political attachments; and although

* Atterbury.

he acted a distinguished part on the side of the opposition, seriously embarrassing the ministry by his sagacity and eloquence, the integrity of his principles had never been called into question. This upright and zealous senator maintained his pledge. He appeared in the following parliament, when the policy against which he protested was abandoned; but died before the expiration of the ensuing year, lamented by all parties.

The temporary triumph which these events yielded to the administration was promptly taken advantage of for the benefit of the country. Several measures were brought forward connected with internal and colonial trade, which the absence of the seceders enabled ministers to carry without difficulty. But some embarrassment was created by a motion, founded on a petition from the dissenters, for a repeal of the test act. The motion seemed to have been agitated at this moment designedly to perplex the whigs, who, much to their discredit, suffered their resentment to prevail over their justice, and threw it out by a larger majority than had ever voted against it before. Walpole's conduct was peculiarly reprehensible, and betrayed a degree of exasperation unworthy of his character and position. A deputation of dissenters having waited upon him, Dr. Chandler, their principal, reminded him of his frequent assurances of good-will to their cause; but he returned the usual answer, that, whatever his private inclinations, the time had not yet arrived. "You have so repeatedly given that answer," said Chandler, "that I trust you will give me leave to ask when the time will come?"—"If you require a specific answer," replied the minister, "I will give it to you in a word — Never."*

At this juncture, unluckily, the interests of Hanover were again forced on the attention of the cabinet, by a petty quarrel between the Danes and Hanoverians about the lordship of Steinhurst, the whole revenues of which scarcely exceeded 1000*l.* per annum. The place was disputed by both parties, and a skirmish ensued, in

* Coxe.

which the Danes were expelled from the castle. The king of Denmark talked loudly of reparation, and threatened a war; but he soon subsided into a treaty, by which he bound himself to furnish 6000 troops for the service of England whenever they should be required, on condition of receiving an annual subsidy of 250,000 rix dollars, and 150,000 more when the troops should be taken into the British pay. The opposition accused the government of having by this treaty purchased Steinhurst for Hanover with British money. The accusation was true; but the real motive, which the minister could not avow with propriety at the time, was that France, eager to take advantage of the breach between Spain and England, and to weaken the latter as much as possible, was tampering with Denmark, and courting her alliance by the offer of splendid subsidies, without requiring any equivalent. In this emergency, England interposed, and secured the friendship of Denmark on more reasonable terms.

The session of parliament closed on the 14th of June, while the plenipotentiaries appointed under the convention were yet engaged in the discussion of the demands of the two powers. But their meetings, protracted and turbulent, only increased the difficulty of adjustment. Spain required that the English ships should be withdrawn from the Mediterranean, and distinctly insisted upon making the recognition of the right to search the basis of the arrangements. But these terms were too exorbitant even for the pacific Walpole; the negotiations were consequently broken off, and war was formally declared against Spain on the 19th of October.

The conduct of the administration throughout these transactions cannot be defended on any ground of public principle, or even on the meaner pretext of political expediency. The war was inevitable from the beginning; and the longer it was delayed the more insolent became the demands of Spain, and the more discontented the people of England, in consequence of the insults and losses to which their trade was exposed in the interval.

By the postponement of hostilities, also, to the last moment, when they could no longer be avoided with safety or credit, another evil was incurred — that of leaving it to be supposed that England was not in a condition to vindicate herself, and lowering her influence in proportion amongst the nations of Europe. Nor was it less to be deplored that a measure of such grave responsibility, instead of being undertaken with calm deliberation, was suddenly adopted at a time when the passions of the people impelled them into the blindest excesses.

The dilemma in which Walpole was placed by a war he had all along opposed reduced him to a painful position amongst his colleagues, the majority of whom fell completely into the views of the king, who had long before declared himself in favour of an appeal to arms. Subjected to obloquy on all sides, and abandoned by some of his oldest friends, he felt the necessity of tendering his resignation. But his majesty refused to receive it, exclaiming, in his passionate way, "Will you desert me in my greatest difficulties?" Walpole's acquiescence in this desire drew fresh opprobrium upon him. To have persisted in his resolution would have been honorable and dignified, since he could no longer continue to guide with advantage the councils of an administration in which his avowed opinions were so openly over-ruled; but to remain in office, nominally directing a course of policy of which he thoroughly disapproved, was justly charged upon him as betraying a slavish love of place incompatible with the independence essential to a minister of the crown.

The parliament was assembled early in November, in order, as the speech stated, that his majesty might have their "immediate advice and assistance at this critical conjuncture." To the great mortification of ministers, the seceders returned to their posts, and claimed a victory over their opponents. "Not one reason," said Pulteney, "can be alleged for justifying our going to war now that was not of equal force before the convention." Walpole reminded the house of

the many useful and popular acts that had been facilitated during the absence of the seceders, and added that he should not be sorry if they seceded again. As to the declaration of war, he maintained that it was nothing more than might have been expected from his majesty whenever the continued refusal of the Spaniards to do justice should render it necessary.

Having thus taken credit for the war, vigorous pre- 1740.
parations were promptly set in motion to carry it on. The opposition, however, left no means unattempted to embarrass the operations of the government. The difficulty of raising the requisite force to man the fleet led to the introduction of a bill for the registration of seamen. This measure, which could be justified only by the imperative circumstances of the case, was furiously assailed as tending to the introduction of French despotism; and such was the outcry against it, that its promoters were compelled to abandon it. The difficulty of procuring seamen was still further increased by the vexatious tactics of the tories, who, in every instance, endeavoured to frustrate the proceedings of the government, until, at length, the merchants, finding their own interests involved in the result, agreed to furnish from their own crews one man in four to the king's ships. The only proposals of ministers that were not resisted were the supplies for the public service, which amounted to the extraordinary sum of 4,059,722*l.*

Happily before the prorogation of parliament intelligence was received in England of the capture of Porto Bello, on the isthmus of Darien, by admiral Vernon, with only six ships of war. This piece of news filled the nation with joy; and the most extravagant eulogies were poured forth in parliament, and throughout the country, upon the courage and abilities of the admiral. But that officer shortly afterwards utterly disappointed the enthusiasm of his admirers; and by an inglorious failure at Carthagena, where he had a mighty armament under his command, lost all the glory he had achieved at Porto Bello. The fate of

warriors, by land or sea, is precarious. A single failure frequently obscures a life of victories; and a hero can hardly hope to preserve his reputation except by continued and uninterrupted successes. Fortune must be on his side as well as skill and courage, or his laurels will fade even while they are freshly bound upon his brow.

The losses of Vernon were balanced by the triumphs of commodore Anson, who was despatched with a squadron into the South Seas for the purpose of annoying the Spaniards. The elements warred against him; but he succeeded, notwithstanding, in taking a great number of rich prizes off the coasts of Chili and Peru, and in plundering the town of Paita. Crossing the Pacific, he captured a Spanish galleon of immense value; and returning by the Cape of Good Hope, he was received in England with enthusiasm, after having completed a voyage of circumnavigation.

Immediately after the prorogation the king went to Hanover, and during his absence the dissensions in the cabinet increased to such a height that a dissolution of the ministry must have ensued, but for the successful intervention of two or three influential peacemakers. Walpole complained that he was thwarted at every turn by Newcastle. "I oppose nothing," he exclaimed: "I give into every thing, am said to do every thing, am to answer for every thing, and yet, God knows, I dare not do what I think right." Newcastle complained that Walpole wanted to suppress the expression of individual opinion in the cabinet. "What do you mean?" demanded his irritated colleague: "the war is yours — you have had the conduct of it — I wish you joy of it." When the king returned, he remonstrated with the petulant secretaries. "As to the business in parliament," he said, "I do not value the opposition, if all my servants act together, and are united; but if they thwart one another, and create difficulties in transacting public business, then, indeed, it will be another case."

The deaths at this juncture of the emperor Charles VI. of Austria, of Frederic William, king of Prussia, and of

the empress of Russia, involved the British cabinet in new and unforeseen difficulties, by opening fresh scenes of continental intrigue, and totally altering the whole system of European politics.

The last session of the present parliament met on the 18th of November. The opposition, disordered to some extent by the loss of Wyndham, made up in malignity and desperation what they wanted in justice and unanimity. The duke of Argyle attempted to intercept the motion for the address in the house of peers, by starting up the moment the king had withdrawn and proposing a short address of his own; but the trick was defeated by a majority of twenty-eight, and the uniform address, an echo of the speech, passed without a division, but with a violent protest, signed by no less than two-and-twenty noblemen. The grand movement, however, was reserved for the house of commons.

On the 11th of February, Sandys, who had already 1741.
distinguished himself by the frequency and vigour of his speeches, crossed the floor of the house, and addressing Walpole, said that he thought it an act of necessary courtesy to inform him that he should on Friday next bring an accusation of several articles against him. Walpole thanked him for the information. Sandys then returning to his place, gave formal notice that on the ensuing Friday he intended to open a matter of great importance which personally concerned the chancellor of the exchequer, and hoped he would attend on that day. Walpole, after a short pause, rose, observed that he would certainly attend, as he was not conscious of any crime, and, putting his hand on his breast, added with some emotion, —

Hic murus aheneus esto,
Nil conscire sibi, nulli pallescere culpæ.

Pulteney immediately observed that the right honourable gentleman's logic and Latin were equally inaccurate, and declared that he had misquoted Horace, whose words were nullâ pallescere culpâ. The minister defended his quotation, Pulteney replied, and Walpole

offered a wager of a guinea, which was accepted, and the question was referred to Nicholas Hardinge, clerk of the house, a man whose classical attainments were universally allowed. Hardinge decided against Walpole, and the guinea was thrown to Pulteney, who, holding it up, exclaimed aloud, "This is the only money I have received from the treasury for many years, and it shall be the last." * He kept his word.

The excitement produced by this notice was unparalleled. The concourse of people in the neighbourhood of the house of commons on the appointed day was prodigious; and the members began to take their seats so early as six o'clock in the morning, although the debate was not opened until one o'clock in the afternoon. The speech delivered by Sandys contained a complete history of the administration of the country under sir Robert Walpole; and, dividing the retrospect and the impeachment under three heads, foreign affairs, domestic affairs, and the conduct of the war, drew such a picture of delinquencies, as was well calculated to inflame the hatred with which the minister was regarded. After dwelling at great length upon the corruption and unconstitutional conduct of the government, he said, "If it should be asked why I impute all these evils to *one person*, I reply, because that *one person* grasped in his own hands every branch of government; that *one person* has attained the sole direction of affairs, monopolised all the favours of the crown, compassed the disposal of all places, pensions, titles, ribands, as well as preferments, civil, military, and ecclesiastical; that *one person* made a blind submission to his will, both in elections and parliament the only terms of present favour and future expectation and continuance in office; and declared, in this very house, that he must be a pitiful minister who did not displace an officer that opposed his measures in parliament." He added, that if no other ground of objection existed, his long continuance

* Coxe. The anecdote was communicated to the biographer of Walpole by Hardinge's son.

in office was a sufficient cause for removing him; that the universal clamour against him rendered it high time to take such a step; that he who had bewildered himself in treaties, and forfeited his word with every court in Europe, and against whom the voice of the world was in unison with that of his country, ought to be no longer permitted to remain at the head of the government; and he concluded by moving for an address to his majesty, praying that he would remove sir Robert Walpole from his majesty's presence and councils for ever.

The principal speakers in support of this motion were lord Limerick, Booth, Fazakerly, Littleton, Pitt, and Pulteney. The debate lasted until three o'clock in the morning — and when Pulteney sat down the minister entered upon his defence. The reply was brilliant, forcible, and minute, resting mainly upon the fact that no specific crime had been stated, that the accusations were loose and general, exhibiting no particular charge, but advancing imputations of accumulative guilt, and that the entire proceedings of the administration which formed the subject of the attack had been uniformly approved by the sanction of parliament. He urged with strenuous emphasis the striking fact, that the sole object of his policy was to preserve tranquillity, which could be effected only by the maintenance of the balance of Europe; and he repudiated with indignation the charge of corruption, boldly challenging his accuser, to the great amazement and confusion of his friends, to produce one specific instance of that kind. As to the patriotism of his adversaries, he treated it with contempt. "A patriot!" he cried — "I venerate the name. But then it is the real and not the pretended patriot who is the object of my reverence. In these times patriots spring up like mushrooms. I could raise twenty of them in a night. A minister has nothing more to do than to refuse compliance with an unjust or unreasonable demand, and up starts a patriot. But the unprincipled efforts of such patriots I alike disdain and detest."

Several tories, who objected to the motion, because they considered it to have an inquisitorial tendency, voted in support of the minister. Amongst these was lord Cornbury, who had always opposed the administration, but who now resisted the motion on the ground that it decided without evidence, a method of prosecution by which the good and the bad were equally endangered, and that it seemed to be intended rather as a popular censure than a legal condemnation. But the most remarkable circumstance that occurred throughout the debate was the course adopted by Shippen. He declared, that he "looked upon the motion as only a scheme for turning out one minister and bringing in another; that as his conduct in parliament had always been regulated with a view to the good of his country, without any regard to his own private interest, it was quite indifferent to him who was in or who was out; and he would give himself no concern in the question." At the conclusion of these words he withdrew, followed by thirty-four of his friends. Shippen's conduct excited an extraordinary sensation in the house; and such was the obloquy that fell upon him in consequence, that some people asserted he had been bribed by an annual pension. The truth, however, appears to be, that Shippen was under a personal obligation to Walpole, which restrained him from taking part in the proceedings, even had he been so inclined.*

The withdrawal of so many members had a sensible effect upon the issue; and the motion was negatived by the unusual majority of 290 against 106.

In the house of lords on the same day, a similar motion was made by lord Carteret, supported by a com-

* Coxe, who devoted infinite pains to the personal history of this period, says that during the time of the prosecutions against the jacobites sir Robert Walpole having discovered a correspondence which one of Shippen's friends had been carrying on with the pretender, Shippen called on the minister, and asked him to save his friend. Sir Robert willingly complied; and then said, "Mr. Shippen I cannot desire you to vote with the administration, for, with your principles, I have no right to expect it; but I only require, whenever any question is brought forward in the house personally affecting me, that you will recollect the favour I have now granted you."—*Memoirs of Walpole.*

pact phalanx of opposition peers. But here also the effort was defeated — the numbers being 108 against 59. The prince of Wales, although he was present at the debate, did not vote; a course which was followed by several peers who held places under government, and who may be reasonably suspected of participating in that sentiment of hostility against a prime minister belonging to the commons, which has so frequently been exhibited by the hereditary chamber. When the motion was disposed of, the duke of Marlborough moved a resolution to the effect, that any attempt to inflict punishment of any kind without proof was contrary to law and justice, which was carried after an obstinate contest; but upon both questions, strong protests were entered by upwards of thirty peers.

It was not, however, in the power of any majorities to save the administration. It received a shock from these proceedings which it never recovered; and from this time, its internal dissensions increased, and its influence at home and abroad rapidly declined.

In April, the king informed both houses that he had received a requisition from the queen of Hungary for assistance, agreeably to existing treaties; that he had ordered the Danish and Hessian auxiliaries to be in readiness to march, and that it would now become necessary to incur extraordinary expenses for the maintenance inviolate of the Pragmatic Sanction. The opposition could not consistently with all their previous declarations refuse help to the queen of Hungary, whom they had in a manner taken under their special protection; but an unfortunate allusion to Hanover in his majesty's speech produced a fierce attack upon the German policy of the king, Shippen reiterating his former protest against any interposition in the affairs of the electorate. In the midst of the storm, however, a vote of 200,000*l.* was carried, on the motion of the minister, as a parliamentary grant to the queen, and a further sum of 300,000*l.* to be employed at his majesty's discretion. These grants being obtained, the

parliament was dissolved on the 25th of April, and the king, contrary to the urgent remonstrances of Walpole, departed for Hanover.

To the elections all eyes were now turned. The struggle was to decide the fate of that minister, who had held the reins of power for a longer term than any of his predecessors, who throughout a period marked by memorable events and transitions, had displayed uncommon capacity for business, and singular aptitude for controlling the machinery of government, but who at last, by a strange combination of circumstances, had incurred the almost universal suspicion of the people, and the ill-disguised jealousy of nearly all his colleagues. He, alone, felt no apprehensions about the result, sinking into a lethargy of confidence from which he was awakened only by his fall.

The duke of Newcastle, Wilmington, and other members of the cabinet, were so desirous of removing Walpole, that they even secretly leagued with the opposition at the hustings, and conspired with the enemies of the king, for the sake of getting rid of the head of the administration to which they belonged. The first trial of strength was in Westminster, where the court influence was so powerful that no attempt had hitherto been made to disturb it. Two opposition candidates were set up; and the proceedings becoming tumultuous, the poll was abruptly closed, the military imprudently called in, and in the midst of the uproar the government members were returned. The example of popular resistance in Westminster was boldly followed in other parts of the country. Large sums of money were subscribed by the tories; the representation was vigorously contested inch by inch; and the strong holds of the government, especially in Cornwall and Scotland, were broken in, and carried by violence or bribes.

While these scenes were enacting in the provinces, the cabinet was rent by divisions. The minister, responsible for all the acts of the administration, was kept in ignorance of the progress of the foreign nego-

tiations, and all the impediments that official malice could devise were thrown in his way. The most calumnious reports were spread abroad concerning him. It was even asserted, that he had taken private measures to paralyse the operations of the fleet that had been sent out to act against the Spaniards; that he had betrayed to Fleury and Patinho the projected movements of the war, and had received large remittances from those ministers to purchase up the parliament. Scandalous pamphlets were published, insinuating the most incredible charges; such as that a dishonourable peace was in contemplation with Spain, the basis of which was the surrender of Gibraltar and Minorca, the aggrandisement of the house of Bourbon, and the degradation of Austria. Profiting by these circumstances, the tories and the disaffected whigs formed a powerful coalition; and directing their combined energies to one point, succeeded in raising a clamour throughout the country, from which, even before the meeting of parliament, the fate of the minister was publicly and insolently predicted. The parties who entered into this unnatural alliance to demolish their common enemy made no provision for the ultimate result; and committed to accident or superior intrigue the construction of the government that was to be founded on his ruin.

CHAP. XII.

1741—1748.

DECLINING INFLUENCE OF WALPOLE. — CONTESTED ELECTIONS. — FRUITLESS OVERTURES TO THE PRINCE OF WALES. — PULTENEY'S MOTION ON THE STATE OF THE NATION. — RESIGNATION OF WALPOLE. — PULTENEY FORMS A COALITION ADMINISTRATION, BUT REFUSES TO TAKE OFFICE. — FEUDS IN THE OPPOSITION. — THE NEW CABINET ADOPT THE POLICY OF THEIR PREDECESSORS. — COMMITTEE OF INQUIRY INTO THE CONDUCT OF WALPOLE. — BILL TO COMPEL EVIDENCE. — FAILURE OF THE INVESTIGATION. — CHARACTER OF WALPOLE. — APOSTASY OF CARTERET. — MILITARY DISASTERS ABROAD. — DECLARATION OF WAR AGAINST FRANCE. — CARTERET'S RESIGNATION. — RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT. — MOTION FOR THE REPEAL OF THE SEPTENNIAL ACT REJECTED. — DEATH OF CHARLES VII. — INVASION OF THE AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS. — CONTINUED FAILURES OF THE ALLIES. — TRANQUILLITY OF IRELAND. — REBELLION OF PRINCE CHARLES IN SCOTLAND. — CHANGE IN THE MINISTRY. — APPOINTMENT AND RESIGNATION OF LORD GRANVILLE. — PRODIGALITY OF THE SUPPLIES. — RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES. — NAVAL VICTORIES OF ANSON AND HOWE. — TREATY OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE.

THE new parliament assembled on the 4th of December, 1741. Onslow was re-elected speaker. The king's speech contained special references to the non-fulfilment of the engagements of foreign powers, and the hitherto fruitless efforts made by his majesty in support of the house of Austria. This circumstance induced a belief that the speech was not dictated by the minister, who had invariably exhibited particular caution in alluding to the king's allies. It was accordingly taken for granted that there was a preponderating party against him in the cabinet, and the feebleness of his conduct at this moment confirmed the suspicion.

An amendment was proposed to the address, leaving out a paragraph thanking his majesty for prosecuting the war with Spain. Walpole permitted this insulting amendment to be carried; and in an answer to a violent speech of Pulteney's, in which all the charges recently brought against the minister were repeated, contented himself with saying that, so far from evading the responsibility of his measures, he was ready to second a motion for inquiring into the state of the nation. The challenge was instantly accepted, and the 21st of January named for hearing the motion, the avowed object of which was to put the administration upon its trial.

In the interim the contested elections were to be decided. It was notorious that the decisions in such cases had become a mere party business ever since the house of commons, on the occasion of the Aylesbury petition, had assumed the right of determining finally the qualifications of electors.* The opposition worked with indefatigable zeal to defeat the ministerial candidates in every instance, carried their own chairman of the election committee, and threw out the sitting members for Westminster by a majority of four; and when the house was adjourned, on the 24th to the 18th of January, it was evident that the influence of the government was at an end in that assembly, hitherto so tractable and subservient. It was expected that the result of the Westminster petition would force Walpole to resign; but he was resolved to make one desperate effort more. In the brief recess that followed he prevailed on the king to make an overture to the prince of Wales for increasing his income to 100,000*l.* and paying his debts, on condition that he would not oppose the measures of government. The prince's reply was a peremptory refusal to all propositions of a similar nature so long as sir Robert Walpole continued at the head of the administration. This was the prelude of the minister's downfall.

* This occurred in 1704, and was strongly opposed by Walpole, then in the beginning of his career.

1742. Parliament re-assembled on the 18th: the Berwick election was carried against the government candidate on the following day; and a bill for examining and stating the public accounts was carried without opposition on the 20th. At last Pulteney's motion came on. The house was the fullest that had been known for a great many years; and after a long and animated debate, in which Walpole displayed unusual energy, it was negatived by the small majority of three—and even this majority was produced by the personal influence of lord Hartington, who succeeded in bringing over two tory members. The total number of votes on this memorable occasion was 503.

Extraordinary efforts were made on both sides to secure votes. Some members who intended to support the minister, and who were waiting in an adjoining apartment, were prevented from getting into the house by a trick of the tories, who contrived to fill the key-hole with sand. Others were carried in to vote from sick chambers. The prince of Wales, who was present at the debate, seeing one gentleman brought in who had lost the use of his limbs, observed to general Churchill that they brought in the lame, the halt, and the blind. "Yes," replied the general, "the lame on our side, and the blind on yours." The result of the division gave a melancholy point to the ill-timed jest.

If Walpole's love of office had not been stronger than his respect for public opinion he would have resigned the next morning. But he waited until he was fairly expelled by clamour. On the 28th, the Chippenham election was carried against him by a majority of 16. This defeat was final; and after animadverting on the ingratitude of several individuals who had voted against him, he declared he would never sit in that house again. On the 3d of February the house was adjourned to the 18th; on the 9th Walpole was created earl of Orford; and on the 11th he resigned all his employments.

It was universally anticipated that it would become the duty of the next administration to enter upon his

impeachment, and strenuous efforts were made to avert such a proceeding. He solicited an interview with the prince of Wales on the subject, and obtained his royal highness's promise that he would protect him against any attacks on his life and fortune. His majesty was no less desirous to spare him; and upon instructing the duke of Newcastle to open a negotiation with Pulteney for the formation of a new ministry, the only condition he insisted upon was, that Walpole should not be prosecuted. But Pulteney replied that he could not entertain such a proposal; that whatever his own inclinations were, it might not be in his power to fulfil an engagement of that nature, "the heads of parties being like snakes, which are carried on by their tails." He declared that he was not a man of blood; but that he thought some parliamentary censure ought to be inflicted for so many years of mal-administration. His majesty was consequently compelled to abandon the proposition, and the formation of the cabinet was left unconditionally in the discretion of Pulteney.

The conduct of Pulteney in this crisis was inexplicable. To use his own expression, he had now "the staff of office in his own hands," and the party he had led to victory confidently expected that all the members of the late cabinet would be removed, and their places supplied from the ranks of the opposition. But Pulteney, without consulting his friends, formed a coalition administration, and committed the further error of refusing office himself, hoping, in the mistaken pride of self-reliance, to achieve the impossibility of directing a government to which he did not belong. Newcastle and Pelham were allowed to retain their places; the earl of Wilmington was appointed to succeed Walpole as first lord of the treasury; Sandys was named chancellor of the exchequer; Carteret secretary of state for the foreign department; new boards of the treasury and admiralty were appointed, the former including only one tory; and the marquis of Tweedale was nominated secretary for Scotland. Pulteney stipulated for a seat

in the cabinet, with a majority, which he thought would insure him the complete control of the administration. But shortly after, discovering his error, he procured a peerage, as earl of Bath, and went into that house which he, himself, had designated as the "hospital of incurables," where he was obscured and persecuted. From that moment he lost all his influence, and, notwithstanding his great capacity, became so insignificant that his former power was looked back upon with surprise. "They who knew him best," says a contemporary writer, "wondered at the popularity he once had; so he, who knew himself least, wondered as much that he ever lost it." *

These arrangements were beheld with astonishment and indignation by the country. The tories, stung by disappointment, assailed Pulteney with the bitterest invectives; and parliament once more became an arena of the fiercest party contention. It was early perceived, that the only change that had been effected was in men, and not in measures; and that the only effect produced by the removal of an obnoxious minister was to strengthen and consolidate his policy. The duke of Argyle, an honest tory, who had accepted the place of master-general of the ordnance, no sooner discovered that his new associates embraced the system of their former opponents, than he resigned in disgust. The first measure of the government was the appropriation of 1,000,000*l.* from the sinking fund for the service of the year — a mode of proceeding which they had uniformly, from session to session, reprobated in Walpole as a ministerial crime. The rage of the opposition was so inflamed at this flagrant act of apostasy, that Philips, one of the most violent of the tories, made a motion for taking the state of the nation into consideration; but it was negatived without a division. All the measures which, out of office, the new ministers had brought forward with so much zeal, were now either suffered to fall into oblivion or opposed. The Pension Bill, one of their

* Onslow.

annual motions, was revived, passed the commons, but was thrown out of the lords, Carteret himself, who was regarded as the head of the administration, voting against it. The Place Bill met the same fate; and a bill to repeal the Septennial Act was vehemently opposed by Pulteney and Sandys, and rejected with as much heat as it had formerly been supported.

But the great movement of the session was a motion for an inquiry into the conduct of lord Orford during the twenty years of his administration. Pulteney was averse to this motion, which was introduced in the lords, and lost. A modified proposition was then made, and carried, for a committee to inquire into his conduct for the last ten years. A committee of secrecy was then appointed, consisting of twenty-one members, all of whom were enemies of Walpole, except two; and of these, he acutely observed, "They will become so jealous of the honour of the committee, that they will no longer pay sufficient regard to mine." The committee proceeded in their labours with indefatigable diligence; but finding they could not substantiate the charges that had been brought forward by papers and documents, they resorted to the examination of the confidential agents who had been employed in the negotiations of the secret service. It appeared that a sum of 95,000*l.* had passed through the hands of Paxton, solicitor to the treasury, and a further sum of 1,052,211*l.*, through the hands of Scroope, secretary to the treasury, making altogether 1,147,211*l.* for secret service, during a period of ten years. Paxton and Scroope were severally interrogated, but refused to answer. The latter declared, that he could not give any explanations without violating his conscience, and that he had laid his case before the king, who authorised him to say, that the disposal of money issued for the secret service requires the utmost secrecy, and was accountable to his majesty only; and that, therefore, his majesty could not permit him to divulge any thing on the subject.

Under these circumstances, the committee applied to

parliament for a bill to indemnify persons who should give evidence in the matter. This bill — the principal of which has been strongly condemned as being inquisitorial, and putting a premium upon perjury and perfidy — was carried in the commons by a majority of twelve, and thrown out of the lords. Thus perplexed between their desire to convict and the impossibility of effecting their purpose by legal testimony, they furnished two reports, in which they set out the general heads of accusation in the various forms of bribery of elections, peculation and profusion in the expenditure of the public monies, and fraudulent contracts; but as these reports contained no specific proofs of particular acts, and consisted of gross sums and loose suppositions, no ulterior measures were founded upon them.

That Walpole was one of the ablest and most sagacious ministers that ever guided the councils of England may now be unhesitatingly asserted. His pacific policy and his financial measures afford, at this distance of time, ample evidence of the comprehensiveness and soundness of his views. Persecuted nearly through his whole life by the bitterest party rancour, entangled in the most complicated foreign intrigues, and thwarted alike by the secret predilections of the sovereign, and by national pride and national prejudice, he eventually succeeded in steering the helm of the state with security into a harbour of repose; and such was the wisdom of his plans, that his enemies who succeeded him admitted and adopted them. It is not so easy, however, to find a defence for the general charge of corruption, which, defeated by the plea of secrecy essential to the service of his majesty, still hangs like a dark cloud over the history of his career. The total sum discovered by the committee to have been expended during the last ten years of his administration amounted to 1,453,400*l.* Some of the items were sufficiently reasonable*; but,

* One of the items brought against him in the reports of the committee was a sum of 50,077*l.* 18*s.* paid to authors and political newspapers, making

after making a fair deduction for unavoidable expenses, a large balance remains unaccounted for. The obvious defence is, that by this expenditure Walpole kept the nation in tranquillity at home and at peace abroad during a period of intricate negotiation, conciliating foreign courts, procuring intelligence, and pensioning useful servants. But peace may be purchased too dearly; and if, as there is too much reason to suspect, a portion of this outlay was employed in corrupting the house of commons, the end ceases to be a valid excuse for the means. Admit a precedent of this nature, and the representative system becomes rotten at the core. Being well known to have entertained a low estimate of public virtue, and to have laid considerable stress at all times upon the power of money in subduing obstacles, such suspicions fall heavily upon his character. In addition to all this, his private magnificence greatly exceeded his private fortune and his official income together, and must have been defrayed from some source which has never been traced, still farther strengthening the accusations which his opponents prosecuted with such relentless malice, and failed to establish.*

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an annual expenditure for those purposes of 5007*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.* This, at least, was not very extravagant, and even in those days it was treated as a matter rather to be laughed at than seriously considered. A modern tory administration would be terribly puzzled to conduct the affairs of the country on so small a stipend for pamphleteers and newspaper partisans. Walpole, however, had no great faith in help of that sort, and was utterly indifferent to literature in all its forms. The consequence was, that he was feebly supported by the press, and suffered for it in the end, when the tide of obloquy was running strongly against him.

* Walpole's private fortune originally was about 2000*l.* per annum, which ultimately rose, by the increased value of landed property, to be worth something more than double that amount. But all that time he was living in great extravagance, and used to hold yearly meetings at Houghton, called "the Congress," which generally lasted six or eight weeks, and were attended by nearly all his supporters in both houses, costing him on the average about 3000*l.* per annum. His buildings, &c. were estimated at 200,000*l.*, and his pictures at 40,000*l.* His wife's property was expended to get rid of encumbrances, and he made a considerable sum by a fortunate speculation in South Sea stock. All his known resources, however, added together, his official income of 3000*l.* and 2000*l.* more for a sinecure, even with the emoluments, which were very considerable, that he procured for his family, will not enable us to account satisfactorily for the profuse style of his living, and the enormous sums laid out upon Houghton.

The minister, escaping from these attacks, went into retirement; but the motion for an inquiry was renewed in the ensuing session. Parliament, however, being already possessed of all the papers upon which such an investigation could be founded, and being aware of their inutility, negatived the proposition. Walpole did not long survive the insatiable enmity of his opponents. He died at Houghton on the 18th of March, 1745.

The next session met in November. In the recess, lord Carteret, who opened his administration with a brilliant project for a grand continental army, had undertaken an embassy to the States-General, for the purpose of proposing that the republic should join England in a declaration of war against France, garrisoning some of the towns of Flanders, transferring 30,000 Dutch troops into the pay of England, and entering into a treaty of commerce. To every one of these proposals the States-General returned a negative; proudly asserting, at the same time, that the troops of the republic were raised only for the republic, and that they had never hired them out. In consequence of this proceeding, the address was indignantly resisted. But the minister prevailed, and the session was distinguished by a display of audacious effrontery, in the support of all the measures which his lordship in opposition had uniformly held up to public scorn and ridicule. The very men who in the last parliament defended the justice and necessity of the Spanish war, and declaimed against standing armies, foreign subsidies, and continental alliances, now suffered the war to droop, transcended their predecessors in the extent of their levies, and, throwing defiance at France, contemplated a fresh scheme of European conquests.

1743. The magnificent military projects of Carteret were rapidly organised, and pompously brought to bear. Lord Stair, already assembled at the head of the confederate forces in the neighbourhood of Frankfort-on-the-Maine, filled the emperor with so much alarm, that his lordship was obliged to send a special messenger to

assure his majesty, that the imperial dignity should not be violated. This was the first blunder of the campaign. The king of England, inspired by Carteret with visions of laurels, joined the camp at Aschaffenburg, with his younger son the duke of Cumberland; but he had scarcely arrived, when, to his indescribable chagrin, he found that the French marshal de Noailles had intercepted him on all the posts of the Rhine and Maine. In a dilemma so perilous, he had no alternative but to take a different route, and accordingly he drew off towards Hanau. This was the second blunder, and was likely to turn out a graver blunder than the former. Noailles had foreseen this movement, and provided against it. On approaching the village of Dettingen, his majesty found the French army drawn up in order of battle to stop his progress. The French commander had laid his plans with such skill, that the English were hemmed in on all sides, by mountain defiles, by the waters of the Maine, and by formidable lines of batteries. The king must have fallen into the hands of the enemy, and the whole army must have been sacrificed, but that the duc de Grammont, on the opposite side, contrary to the express orders of the marshal, advanced through the narrow defiles, and gave battle in the open plain, which, of course, equalised the chances. The British, elated at this unexpected piece of good fortune, enacted miracles of bravery, and, instead of being surrounded and destroyed, achieved a brilliant victory.

This fortunate event changed the previous resolution of the States-General; and the allies were joined at Spire in September by 20,000 Dutch auxiliaries. But there was no enemy to encounter. Marshal Noailles had retired into Alsace, and the allies, after a variety of fruitless random excursions, went into winter-quarters. Lord Stair was so disgusted with these inglorious pursuits, that he threw up his command.

The designs of the government, however, ripened 174
into action in the following spring. France declared

war against England, on the ground that the king of Great Britain had violated his neutrality, and had dissuaded the court of Vienna against acceding to an accommodation. The pacific Fleury was no more, and the policy of Versailles had undergone a revolution. This declaration was promptly responded to by a similar declaration on the part of England, no longer restrained by the conciliatory spirit of Walpole. Nearly the whole of Europe was now in arms.

At this critical juncture, the cabinet of England was passing through another stage of internal revolution. Carteret, advanced in the peerage with the title of earl of Granville, after many imperious struggles with his colleagues, who soon became jealous of the haughty ascendency he assumed over the king, felt that the ill success of the war, and his own unpopularity with the nation, would render it impossible for him to remain in office. Anticipating, therefore, an event which he knew to be inevitable, he resigned, and was followed by Sandys, now lord Sandys, and others. The death of lord Wilmington having left the office of first lord of the treasury open, Pelham succeeded to it, and combining with it that of chancellor of the exchequer, took the head of the administration. This movement gave increased solidity to the coalition by a larger infusion of tories. Lord Chesterfield went to Ireland, the duke of Bedford was placed at the head of the admiralty, and William Pitt, who had taken a conspicuous part in the recent debates against Walpole and Carteret, was admitted as paymaster of the forces, with a seat in the cabinet. The consequence of these changes was that the court-party was placed in perfect security beyond the reach of the opposition, and patriotism, a phrase then in common use, went out of fashion in the house of Commons.

1745. Shortly after the meeting of parliament in December the principles of the new ministry were exposed to a test which at once convicted them of treachery to all their former professions. In the month of January it was moved that two acts made in the reign of Edward III.

for holding a parliament once in every year should be read; upon which Mr. Carew rose to ask leave to bring in a bill for holding annual parliaments. He avowed that he designed the proposition as a decisive test of the sincerity of those declarations which the ministers of the crown recently appointed to office had, for so many successive years, accustomed themselves to repeat within the walls of that house; and the result would show whether they did not themselves merit those severe epithets which they had so lavishly bestowed upon their predecessors. Alluding to the unnatural union of parties in the government, he pointed out the sacrifice of principle it entailed upon the weaker section, and showed that remaining in office under such circumstances was incompatible with their honour and independence. "It was not enough," he observed, "that the new ministers should give a simple assent to the motion; for if they had coalesced with persons whose influence was, upon trial, found sufficiently powerful to defeat all efforts of political reform, it was incumbent upon them immediately to relinquish those offices which they had so precipitately accepted without any stipulations in favour of the public, and unreservedly to declare against those with whom they had so recently united." After a speech, in which he touched upon the principal arguments that had so frequently before been urged against septennial parliaments, he was followed by Mr. Sydenham, who made some observations of a still more striking character. He observed, that the necessity of preventing, or at least diminishing, the extent and effect of ministerial corruption must be universally admitted; and that of all measures that could be devised, none would be found so effectual as the restoration of annual parliaments. To the fatal introduction of long parliaments and their concomitant evils he attributed, in a great degree, that remarkable change which had of late years taken place in the morals and manners of the people. The virtues of generosity and hospitality in the upper, and of honesty, frugality, and industry in the lower, classes, were nearly extinguished

by political corruption. No sooner did ministers begin to solicit votes, instead of appealing to the judgment of members of parliament, rewarding those who complied with places and pensions, than voters began to barter their votes for similar rewards; and the regular channel through which honours and preferments flowed was perverted, and the real interests of the country were sacrificed to promote the interests of those whose votes influenced the elections. Even in the army and navy this appeared to be the best qualification for entitling a man to preferment. "We must, therefore," continued the honest statesman, "demolish the foundation of this fabric of corruption; we must render it impossible for a minister to expect to gain a majority in parliament, or at elections, either by bribery, or by a partial distribution of places and preferments — I say, we must do this if we intend to restore that spirit by which our ancestors preserved their liberties, and gained so much glory to their country. And, for this purpose, nothing can be so effectual as the restoration of annual parliaments." Having made some further observations to the same effect, he continued, — "Annual parliaments will demolish the market of corruption. Ministers will not corrupt when corruption can be of no avail; and though contests may occasionally take place, the magnitude of the object will not be such as to occasion either venality or violence."

It is worthy of particular notice that every one of these sound constitutional objections to the working of long parliaments have remained in force to the present time, and that, even under the reform bill, precisely the same evils still exist, although to a less extent, owing to a variety of causes, amongst which the altered spirit of the age is predominant; and that "parliamentary interest" continues in the ascendant above all substantive claims, merits, or influence of all kinds whatever. The value of a vote in parliament, under the septennial act, to the minister, is in the inverse ratio of its responsibility to the electors; while under an annual parliament it would be comparatively value-

less to the minister, and, by being constantly subject to popular revision, would really fulfil the true end of representation. The same reasoning would apply to another source of complaint, which has produced extensive mischief under the septennial act, but which would be greatly diminished, if not wholly extinguished, by a return to annual parliaments — the intimidation and corruption of electors. It is not a little surprising that the advocates of popular doctrines who, on abstract grounds, object to the employment of the ballot as a refuge against the tyranny of landlords, and on the other hand, resist the enlargement of the elective franchise to the extent necessary to overwhelm that despotism, have not discovered the safest, most effectual, and most constitutional permanent remedy, in the restoration of annual parliaments. If the representatives of the people returned their trusts every year back into the hands of the people, there would be nothing to fear from landlords, no necessity for the concealment of votes in the mystery of the ballot-box, and less occasion for extensive changes in the franchise.

The only minister who spoke upon this question was sir William Yonge, secretary-at-war, who made a feeble and sophistical answer to the arguments of Carew and Sydenham. All the other ministers, who held principal offices, and who had formerly distinguished themselves in opposition to the septennial bill, preserved a profound silence. Their altered sentiments, however, were betrayed on the division, when the motion was negatived by a majority of thirty-two. Parliamentary reform was, from this time forth, banished from the debates. The opposition perceived that it was hopeless, and for thirteen years no reference whatever was made to the subject; and then, when a motion was introduced for shortening the duration of parliament, it scarcely excited sufficient interest to provoke a discussion.

The remaining events of the year were not of much importance. Abroad, the death of the emperor Charles VII. suddenly changed all the plans of the contending

powers. A treaty of mutual accommodation was soon after entered into between the queen of Hungary and the young elector of Bavaria, which, amongst other conditions, guaranteed the vote of the elector for the grand duke of Tuscany, at the ensuing imperial election. The decisive successes of the Prussians over the arms of Austria led to a similar arrangement between her majesty and Prussia. In the mean while, the French army, under the command of marshal Saxe, invested Tournay, and the allies, coming to the defence of that place, were signally routed at Fontenoy, with a loss of 10,000 men. The duke of Cumberland, whose military experience was confined to a single campaign, proved himself utterly unfit for the responsible duties he had undertaken; and, after witnessing the reduction of Tournay, Ghent, Bruges, Ostend, and all the principal places in Flanders, he was compelled to retreat for safety behind the canal of Antwerp.

At home, the principal incidents deserving of record were the salutary effects produced by the impartial administration of the government of Ireland; and a romantic effort in Scotland to establish the Pretender.

The system of policy adopted by lord Chesterfield in Ireland was an experiment. The application of the ordinary principles of justice and humanity to the people of that country produced as much speculation at one side of the Channel as gratitude and confidence at the other. The Irish had been hitherto treated as semi-barbarians; they were now, almost for the first time, treated as men possessed of the common instincts, affections, passions, and capabilities of other nations. The result was such as could not fail to satisfy the hopes, and reward the labours, of a wise and tolerant statesman. At the moment of the breaking out of the rebellion in Scotland, his lordship was urged to adopt violent measures towards the Roman catholics, with the view of checking the growth of disaffection. But, confiding in the people, he rejected all suggestions of a coercive nature, and secured the popular allegiance by acts of

moderation and clemency. He discovered the secret of governing Ireland without oppression, and demonstrated the practicability of attaching the whole population to the crown of England by the simple means of a just administration of the law.* Even the Roman catholic priests, whose influence at this crisis was especially dreaded by the protestant party, displayed in their pastoral charges and public discourses the strongest devotion to the government; so that, while Scotland was convulsed to its centre by the claims of the Pretender, Ireland was in profound repose. This fact was valuable as an illustration of a truth which the history of all countries attests, that religion becomes converted into party only when it is made the object of persecution.

The rebellion in Scotland originated in the intrigues of the French cabinet, who, for the purpose of making a diversion of the English army in Flanders, incited the son of the Pretender, prince Charles Edward, to attempt the invasion of Great Britain. The moment was favourable to such a design, as the kingdom was doubly exposed to attack from the discontent of the people, and the absence on the Continent of all the available military forces. Prince Charles landed in the western islands in the month of August, while the king was in Hanover. At first, the rumour of his landing was treated as a fiction; but as he advanced to the southward, acquiring increased strength on his march, the regency issued a proclamation offering a reward of 30,000*l.* for his apprehension, despatched messengers to hasten the return of the king, requiring at the same time 6000 Dutch auxiliaries, and recalling several regiments from the Netherlands. The militia was, also, put into requisition, corps

* An anecdote related of lord Chesterfield at this period will show with what coolness he resisted the prejudices of the alarmists by whom he was surrounded. A magistrate of the dominant party, heated with apprehensions of imaginary insurrections, rode up from the country, and arriving in Dublin in the morning, booted and spurred and covered with dust, rushed into the presence of the viceroy to inform him that the people were *rising* in the West. "Well," replied his lordship, looking at his watch, "it is time they should, for it is past nine o'clock."

of volunteers were incorporated, and new regiments were expeditiously raised. As soon as a sufficient force was collected, sir John Cope hastened to Inverness to arrest the progress of the adventurer. But prince Charles had, in the mean while, advanced upon Edinburgh, which surrendered without resistance, taken up his residence at Holyrood-house, and proclaimed his father king of Great Britain. On receiving intelligence of this event, sir John Cope changed his route, and encamped with his army, about 3000 strong, near Preston-pans. The next morning, the prince, at the head of an equal number of Highlanders, attacked him sword-in-hand; and such was the ferocity of a mode of fighting to which the English were unaccustomed, that the king's troops were effectually routed in less than ten minutes. The prince was now absolute master of Scotland, with the exception of a few fortresses. Elated with success, and receiving ample supplies from France, he next penetrated to Carlisle, which surrendered to him in November. Several Scotch lords, and other persons of weight and distinction, had joined him on his victorious progress; but, on the other hand, some of the most ancient and influential clans assembled in arms in defence of the government. Extensive military preparations were now in rapid progress all over the kingdom, and the king resolved to take the field in person, and set up the royal standard on Finchley Common. The prince was at Derby when he obtained information of the vigorous measures of the royalists, and, struck by a sudden panic, he resolved to retreat into the north. This resolution was promptly carried into effect; and, reinforcing the garrison of Carlisle as he passed through, he reached Glasgow on Christmas day, after which he invested the fortress of Stirling. He had scarcely left Carlisle when the duke of Cumberland, to whom the chief command of his majesty's troops was confided, appeared before the city, and compelled it to surrender. Tracking the rebels onward to Edinburgh, the duke forced them to abandon the siege of Stirling, and to cross the Firth.

General Harley had recently given them battle at Falkirk, and, after a disorderly conflict, was disgracefully defeated. Their numbers and their spirit had suffered much in these irregular and harassing movements; but when they arrived at Culloden, finding the duke still hanging on their rear, they drew up in compact order to receive him. The battle was short, sanguinary, and decisive. The highlanders again attempted to break down the lines with their broadswords and Lochaber axes; but the English met them with fixed bayonets, and threw them into disorder. Their confusion was increased by the cavalry of the royal army falling upon their flanks; and in less than half an hour the entire force was dispersed, the prince escaping with great difficulty from the field. The duke of Cumberland is justly charged with having resorted to unnecessary excesses in the conduct of this engagement. Orders were issued to give no quarter; and great numbers were slain in the pursuit, after all resistance was at an end. It is even affirmed, by Scotch historians, that wanton barbarities were committed on the persons and families of the rebels, for which no excuse could be offered on the ground of necessity or law. The executions that followed were equally cruel and superfluous, and the triumph of the royal cause was signalised by the most revolting acts of vengeance. But in the national thanksgiving all such considerations were set aside; and the duke of Cumberland was congratulated on his victory by both houses of parliament, the commons adding 25,000*l.* per annum to his income as a mark of their gratitude. While the duke was receiving the homage of the nation, the unfortunate prince Charles was wandering amongst the woods and mountains of Scotland, a fugitive in the domains of his ancestors; until, after enduring numberless privations, and passing through a succession of perilous adventures, he at last escaped out of the kingdom in a small vessel which landed him on the coast of Bretagne. The hopes of the Stuart family were now effectually crushed, and

from this time the name of the Pretender was heard no more.

1746. Parliament opened in January; but a new convulsion in the ministry suddenly paralysed the progress of business. The king, who, after the resignation of Walpole, had lent himself to a variety of intrigues in the cabinet, desired to bring back lord Granville. His majesty had no sooner signified this wish, than the duke of Newcastle and lord Harrington delivered in their resignations. Lord Granville was, accordingly, made secretary of state, and the earl of Bath first lord of the treasury. These unpopular appointments broke up the administration. The duke of Bedford, the earl of Chesterfield, Pelham, and nearly every member of the administration, including nine dukes, threw up their offices. Lord Granville finding it impossible to form a government, abandoned the attempt, after a fruitless interval of four days. The former ministers were immediately recalled; and the king was taught the important lesson, that the sovereign of a free people must consult public opinion in the choice of his advisers.

The whole business of the session, with a few unimportant exceptions, consisted in voting supplies with unprecedented prodigality. Land and sea forces were granted to the number of 120,000 men. Subsidies were also granted to the Hanoverians, the Dutch, the Hessians, the Saxons, and the electors of Mayence and Cologne. A sum of 300,000*l.* was voted to the king of Sardinia, and 400,000*l.* to the queen of Hungary, and his majesty received a vote of credit for 500,000*l.*

Yet, notwithstanding these liberal votes, the progress of the English arms was extremely unsatisfactory. With the exception of some rich captures of prizes in the West Indies, and the conquest of the island of Cape Breton in North America, the naval force, which had lost some credit two years before in an engagement with the French off Toulon, added little to the influence of Great Britain, rapidly waning in Europe through the failure of the war in Flanders, where the allies were

driven from post to post, and compelled to retire to Maestricht. The ensuing session of parliament, convened in November, convinced of the necessity of acting with vigour, increased the supplies to an extent unprecedented in the annals of the country; and in this year of disasters the total amount voted by parliament exceeded, by two millions and a half, the largest annual sum raised during the reign of queen Anne, when the world was filled with the renown of England.

In the ensuing March the allies took the field again, 1747.
under the command of the duke of Cumberland, upwards of 100,000 strong. But the veteran Saxe remained in his cantonments, contenting himself with intercepting the provisions, and declaring that he would teach the duke of Cumberland that the first duty of a general was to provide for the health and preservation of his troops. In April he moved out of his winter quarters, and despatching count Lowendahl with 30,000 men to Dutch Flanders, prepared to descend in person upon Zealand. The Dutch nation, thrown into consternation by these movements, placed their last resource in the house of Orange, connected with their history by so many ties of glory and suffering; and insisted upon investing the prince of Orange with the dignity of stadtholder — a demand which the states-general in the present posture of affairs did not consider it prudent to oppose. The dignity was conferred on the 2d of May, and in the following year was made hereditary. This circumstance inspired the people with enthusiasm, and great efforts were made to prepare for the formidable enemy, now advanced as far as Louvain. The allies took post at Laffeldt, to cover Maestricht; and the French resolved on a general attack for the purpose of dislodging them. The British soldiers displayed extraordinary valour on this occasion; but the unskilful arrangements of the duke of Cumberland rendered it useless, losing in general results all the advantages that had been gained in detail.*

* "Had there been 50,000 such soldiers as you," said a French officer to an English private, who had been made prisoner, "we should have found it

At length, their lines being disordered beyond recovery, the commander, who was unable to lead them to victory, ordered a retreat. The self-devotion and intrepidity of sir John Ligonier, who threw himself with some squadrons of horse between the pursuers and the pursued, enabled the army to retire in good order; and, although the battle was lost, Maestricht was still safe. Marshal Saxe, anticipating greater difficulties than he had previously calculated upon in the reduction of that city, detached a large force to lay siege to Bergen-op-Zoom, a fortification which had hitherto been considered impregnable. Two months were occupied in this dangerous enterprise, with tremendous carnage at both sides; but the besiegers ultimately succeeded in making some inconsiderable breaches, through which they surprised the fortress on the night of the 16th of September, and obtained possession of the ramparts before the garrison could assemble. By this gallant achievement, the French became masters of the entire navigation of the Scheldt.

Successful, however, as France had been in this war, the expenditure it required, and the European combinations to which it was giving birth, could not be regarded with indifference by the court of Versailles. Overtures of a pacific character were accordingly made to England and Holland; and, although they were at first viewed with coldness, a congress was opened at Aix-la-Chapelle in the following spring, where preliminaries of peace were mutually agreed upon and signed.

The disgraces which befell the English legions on land were this year in some degree balanced by the triumphs that attended the naval armaments. Admirals Anson and Warren, falling in with a French squadron bound for America in April, compelled the enemy to strike his colours after an obstinate engagement; and in the following October admiral Hawke obtained a similar victory, capturing seven line-of-battle ships. In

very difficult to conquer you."—"There were men enough like me," was the reply; "but we wanted one like marshal Saxe."

both instances the English fleets were superior to those of the enemy, and perhaps to that circumstance might be attributed the irregularity and fearless impetuosity with which, regardless of the line of battle, they bore down upon their opponents.

These victories were made the most of in the new parliament, which opened its first session in November. The suppression of the rebellion in Scotland, and the prospect of a peace arising from the approaching congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, furnished additional grounds of congratulation in the king's speech; and the session, 1748. which continued until May, passed off with unusual serenity, his majesty being happily enabled, on dismissing the parliament, to announce that the preliminaries of peace were actually signed.

A more inglorious period in the annals of England is scarcely to be found than that which is embraced within the three previous years. Disasters and disgraces abroad —rebellion at home — discontents in the cabinet — the king, secretly instigated by lord Granville, thwarting the ministers whom he was forced to accept — and the government in the hands of two brothers, strongly contrasted in character, and agreeing only on the necessity of managing the king, although they adopted different modes of accomplishing their object. The duke of Newcastle was negligent and rash, while Pelham, a man of business, was cautious and indefatigable. The regularity and decision of the latter kept the administration together. The only remaining members of the government who contributed to its stability were Pitt and Fox. The former had broken with the prince of Wales to obtain office, which he preserved by eloquence and assiduity, for his family-connections were few, and not very influential. The latter was almost the sole survivor of the old Walpole party, and was maintained in the office of secretary at war chiefly by the influence of the duke of Cumberland, whose favour with the king was ostentatiously set off against his unpopularity with the nation.

The treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, really solicited by

France, was more useful to the administration than all the measures originated by themselves, relieving them completely from the ruin which impended over their military projects. There can hardly be any doubt that unless the war had been terminated by some means at this juncture, the allies must have been driven beyond the Rhine, and the banners of France would have floated over the gates of Amsterdam. The disparity between the duke of Cumberland and marshal Saxe was notorious to the whole of Europe. The duke failed every where —the marshal's progress was a series of brilliant triumphs. A vast army had been assembled in the Netherlands at the expense of England—its objects were indefinite—its motions irregular and destitute of practical results—many thousands of lives had been sacrificed—and nothing was gained. This calamitous display of a mass of inert strength, while it sullied the honour of England, reduced the whole of the Austrian Netherlands to a state of temporary subjection under the French troops, who, during the sitting of the congress, were in undisputed possession of the country, and had even penetrated beyond the boundaries of Flanders and Dutch Brabant.

The terms of the settlement were favourable to the interests of all parties, the basis of the accommodation being a general and mutual restitution of conquests. England resigned Cape Breton to regain Madras, and France was satisfied with the cession of Parma to the Infanta Don Philip, who, in fact, was already in possession of that duchy. As to the right of search, which was the original cause of the war with Spain, it was suffered to drop silently into oblivion, and was never re-asserted. This peace was hailed in England with universal rejoicings, for the people were wearied with the expenses and disasters of those protracted hostilities. But the opponents of the government did not forget to remind them that the country had not secured a single acquisition by the whole war, even Porto Bello having been evacuated soon after it was taken.

CHAP. XIII.

1749—1753.

WEAKNESS OF THE OPPOSITION. — INNOVATIONS IN THE MUTINY BILL. — INCONSISTENCIES OF PITT. — PELHAM REDUCES THE INTEREST ON THE PUBLIC SECURITIES. — USEFUL LABOURS OF THE SESSION. — RIOTS AT THE WESTMINSTER ELECTION. — ARBITRARY PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS. — DEATH OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. — REGENCY BILL. — EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG PRINCE. — FOREIGN PROTESTANTS' NATURALISATION BILL. — GREGORIAN CALENDAR ADOPTED. — DEATHS IN THE ROYAL FAMILIES OF EUROPE. — SUBSIDY TREATIES WITH THE GERMAN PRINCES. — THE ELECTION OF THE KING OF ROME ABANDONED. — ENACTMENTS OF THE SESSION. — FEEBLE MOTIVES OF THE OPPOSITION. — PRUSSIAN DEMAND OF REPARATION FOR CAPTURES. — REDUCTION OF EXPENDITURE. — BILL FOR THE NATURALISATION OF THE JEWS. — BILL FOR THE PREVENTION OF CLANDESTINE MARRIAGES. — EXECUTION OF DR. CAMERON. — STATE OF EUROPE.

THE opposition, dismembered by the changes which drew its principal leaders into the administration, was no longer the formidable body that shook the senate with its eloquence in the days of Walpole. As a party it was disunited, and incapable of any great or combined operations. The prince of Wales, who had latterly been alienated more than ever from the court, was the only rallying point it possessed; but, split into factions by Dodington, lords Egmont, Middlesex, and others, its strength was wasted in diverging efforts, which only betrayed the *animus* of political hostility, and the feebleness of personal divisions. The debates in parliament consequently ceased to exhibit those mighty struggles of intellect by which former sessions were distinguished. 1749.

The drama was not less exciting; but the actors were unequal to its demands.*

The only question of importance that appears to have attracted attention in this session arose from some remarkable innovations introduced into the mutiny bill. The desire of the sovereign to preserve his power over the army, independently of all parliamentary interference, had long before called up the patriotic spirit of the commons; and all the members of the government who were then in opposition took prominent parts in the successive attempts that were made to diminish the royal prerogative. But the views of these statesmen had undergone a total revolution since their accession to office; and the men who were most clamorous, session after session, in support of such measures as the army pay and pensions' bills, now came forward with additional clauses to the mutiny bill, by which martial law was to be extended to all officers on half pay, and the influence of the crown increased in proportion. Mr. Pitt was the strenuous advocate of this measure, and carried it with a large majority. The reasons he assigned for supporting it are not a little curious. He said that "the existence of English liberty actually depended on the moderation of the sovereign and the virtue of the army: to that virtue we trust even at this hour, small as our army is—to that virtue we must have trusted in whatever manner this bill had been modelled; and without this virtue, should the lords, commons, and the people of England entrench themselves behind parchment up to

* It must be observed, however, that the debates at this period were very imperfectly reported. Dr. Johnson wrote the debates for the "Gentleman's Magazine" from November, 1740, to February, 1743. They were published some months after the close of each session. Sir John Hawkins throws considerable doubt upon their authenticity, but subsequent examination and comparison with other statements, diaries, and notes, confirm their substantial correctness. The style of composition is a different affair. Dr. Johnson made all the speakers utter the same pompous and grandly-moulded language, expanding the form of their sentiments if he did not alter them. From 1743 to 1766 no regular collection was published. Almon's "Continuation" then appeared, but it embraced only the commons, and was scanty and incomplete. The deficiency has been subsequently supplied, as well as it could be done at such a distance of time, by the editor of the "Parliamentary History."

the teeth, the sword will find a passage to the vitals of the constitution." All the arguments in defence of standing armies exhibit similar contradictions. The necessity of interweaving some popular sentiments into the vindication of a principle so utterly irreconcilable to popular feelings committed ministers to the most flagrant absurdities. The reasons urged by Pitt for extending the royal prerogative were the very strongest reasons that could be urged for curtailing it; because if liberty be in any degree dependent on the moderation of the sovereign, it will be best secured by limiting the sovereign discretion within the narrowest bounds consistent with the general theory of the constitution. The dependence of liberty on the "virtue" of the army is an enigma. In what does that "virtue" consist? Automatic obedience. It is clear, therefore, that liberty depends not on the military "virtue," but on the manner in which it is controlled and directed.

Of Pitt it must be observed that, with the most comprehensive powers, he frequently allowed himself to be placed in predicaments of this description. The passionate patriotism of his youth was too often exchanged, when he became a minister, for servility to the desires of the court. A remarkable instance occurred in the following year. A treaty was concluded with Spain, by which certain points left undecided by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle were settled, and the commercial rights of England acknowledged and ratified. It was expected on this occasion that the right of search, so long insisted upon, and so grievously exercised by Spain, would be formally renounced, but no allusion whatever was made to it; and Pitt, who, in former years, had been amongst the foremost opponents of the Walpole administration, clamouring for a war, and demanding that the right of search should be explicitly given up, now came forward to justify the abandonment of that condition. He apologised for the change his opinions had undergone on the ground that experience had made him wiser. "I acknowledge," said he, "that I did contend strongly for the

1750.

preliminary renunciation, because, at that time, being young and sanguine, I thought it right and reasonable. But I am now ten years older, have considered matters more coolly, and am convinced that the privilege of no search, with respect to British vessels sailing near the American shore, will never be obtained unless Spain shall be brought so low as to acquiesce in any terms which we, as victors, may propose." In contrast with this declaration may be cited his celebrated reply to Horace Walpole, when that veteran diplomatist reflected upon his youth, many years before. "Whether youth can be justly imputed to any man as a reproach, I shall not determine; but I will affirm that the wretch who, after having seen the consequences of repeated errors, continues still to blunder, and whose age has only added obstinacy to stupidity, deserves not that his grey hairs should secure him from insult; and much more is he to be abhorred, who, as he has advanced in age, has receded from virtue, and who deliberately devotes the remnant of his life to the ruin of his country." Yet we find him adopting, when age had matured his own judgment, the policy of that very "wretch" whose obstinate delinquency he thus violently denounced. The errors of such men as Pitt are useful in pointing the moral of party warfare.

Mr. Pelham, in his capacity of chancellor of the exchequer, brought forward a grand measure of finance this session; which, although it met considerable resistance at first, was ultimately adopted, and attended by the most beneficial effects. The main object of this project was similar to that which had formerly been submitted to parliament by sir John Barnard, namely, the liquidation of all the redeemable annuities by an immediate payment of the principal; but it was accompanied by improvements which were not embraced in that scheme. The plan proposed was to give the shareholders the option of receiving the entire amount at par, or to consent to a reduction of the interest from four to three and a half per cent. for seven years, and then to remain fixed at three per cent. Such a proposa

at such a time, excited the astonishment of Europe, for it could not be comprehended how England, at the close of a long and expensive war, which had so seriously increased the burdens of the country, could find the requisite means of paying off such of the public creditors as should prefer the immediate discharge of the principal to a reduction of the interest. The opposition either shared in this astonishment or affected it. They affirmed that the nation was exhausted; that commerce was paralysed; that public credit was at the last stage of utter ruin, and that all the treaties which had been lately concluded with the powers of Europe were prejudicial to the interests of Great Britain. Pelham refuted these assertions by referring to the tables of imports and exports, which proved that the commerce of England was in a more flourishing condition than ever it had been before, and that public credit was in so firm a state, as to render the time highly favourable for such an experiment. The plan was accordingly communicated to the commons, canvassed in all its details, and finally passed into law. A great proportion of the annuitants subscribed within the time stipulated by the act; but the three great companies, and individual proprietors holding stock to the value of between 8,000,000*l.* and 9,000,000*l.*, refused to embrace the terms, thereby forfeiting the advantages of the arrangement. The minister, unwilling to punish them too rigorously, proposed a second subscription, by which they were still allowed to subscribe, but which limited the duration of the three and a half per cent. to a term of five years. This proposal had the desired effect. The companies and the reluctant annuitants acquiesced without any farther hesitation; and the plan was carried into execution with the unanimous consent of all parties immediately affected, and to the obvious benefit of the nation at large.

Two or three very useful measures also distinguished the labours of the session. One of these was an act for encouraging the importation of iron from the British

colonies in North America. Hitherto iron and steel had been imported from Sweden; and as that country purchased necessaries and superfluities from France and other countries, there was a large balance in ready money paid by England on account of the trade in iron. To put an end to this unequal and injurious system, the duties on American pig and bar iron were abolished; and the importation of these articles from the colonies in exchange for British goods and manufactures rendered it no longer necessary to trade on such oppressive terms with Sweden.

A measure was carried about the same time for the encouragement of the British fisheries. By this act a society was incorporated, with power to raise a capital of 500,000*l*. The project was one of great national importance, designed to give employment to a vast number of persons, and to throw into the hands of native fishermen and labourers that extensive and prosperous trade which had hitherto been monopolised by the persevering industry of the Dutch. But unfortunately the plan was so clumsily contrived, that the sanguine expectations it excited were completely disappointed. The opposition predicted its failure; urging upon the attention of government the danger of intrusting such an undertaking to a joint-stock company, unavoidably clogged with heavy expenses; and pointing out the folly of fitting up in London the vessels destined for the fishery, whereby increased expense, and the hazard of a long voyage to the rendezvous at the sound of Brassa in Shetland, would be incurred. The government partially admitted that these objections were reasonable; but they were too impatient to take advantage of the prevailing enthusiasm on the subject to allow time for alterations. The result was, that the company expended a large sum of money to no purpose, and left the fisheries, if possible, in a more languishing condition than it found them.

At the Westminster election, this year the spirit that had been formerly called so effectively into action against the minister of the day was exerted with increased

vigour against lord Trentham, the ministerial candidate. Lord Trentham had previously been a popular favourite, and one of the leaders of opposition; but, accepting a place at the board of admiralty, and supporting the measures of the government, he lost his influence, and the electors, at their own expense, set up a private gentleman, sir George Vandeput, against him. The struggle was fierce on both sides: all possible means of intimidation, bribery, ridicule, and intrigue were resorted to; riotous mobs filled the streets; and while the election lasted, Westminster presented a scene of extraordinary disorder and tumult. At length the poll was closed, and lord Trentham was declared to have the majority; but a scrutiny was demanded on the other side, and the return was delayed for several months by feuds and artifices on the part of the agents of the candidates. The writ had been issued in the previous November; and as no return was made at the end of February, Mr. Fox moved that the officers concerned in the election should be called to the bar and examined. It appearing that the delay was occasioned by the severity of the contest about disputed votes, they were admonished to exercise proper diligence, and assured of protection in the discharge of their duties. In the mean while, the session closed before the scrutiny terminated, and the return was consequently postponed to the ensuing year.

Soon after parliament assembled, the high bailiff re- 1751.
turned lord Trentham as duly elected. The opposite party immediately taxed that officer with injustice; asserted that ministerial influence had been most scandalously employed in the affair, and petitioned the house, complaining of the return. The petition was ordered to lie upon the table, and no motion whatever was made to inquire into its merits. But the high bailiff, who was in attendance by previous concert, was called in, and desired to acquaint the house with what had been done in pursuance of the instructions he had formerly received respecting the execution of the writ. In reply, that officer stated that the election had been protracted by

affected delays. Being asked by whom, lord Egmont interposed, objected to the question as improper, and moved the order of the day. The ministerial majority, however, out-voted the objection; and the high bailiff proceeded to state that he had been impeded in the scrutiny, and otherwise maltreated, by Crowle, the counsel for sir George Vandeput, the hon. Alexander Murray, brother to Lord Elibank, and one Gibson, an upholsterer. Upon this statement it was moved that the three accused persons should be brought to the bar of the house. A stormy debate ensued; the arbitrary character of the proceeding was vehemently protested against; the injustice of setting aside the petition of the electors, and proceeding to an investigation when no complaint had been made, instead of entering into the inquiry upon the averments of the petitioning party, was strongly pleaded; but ministers carried their object. Crowle declared that he had merely discharged a professional duty to his client; the argument, however, availed him nothing, and he was reprimanded on his knees and discharged. Gibson was sent to Newgate, but discharged upon a petition of penitence, after receiving a similar reprimand on his knees. Mr. Murray was charged with having uttered some insulting expressions, and it was agreed he should be heard by counsel. In the mean time the tyrannical majority ordered him to be taken into custody. The opposition in vain attempted to rescue the house from this disgraceful proceeding, by an appeal to the uniform practice of English law, which in all such cases requires a form of trial before the person accused should be deprived of his liberty. The expostulation was fruitless. Ministers were resolved to overawe the new spirit that was growing up in the precincts of the court. Murray was kept in custody until the charge was investigated, and then ordered to be sent close prisoner to Newgate; and to aggravate the punishment, they added that he should be called to the bar and receive the sentence on his knees. He appeared accordingly, and was directed to fall upon his knees. He

indignantly refused to comply. The house was in commotion; ministers were perplexed how to devise a measure sufficiently strong to satisfy their fury. At last, in the midst of tumultuous clamours, it was resolved that he be kept close prisoner in Newgate, without pen, ink, or paper; that no person whatever should have access to him; and that a committee should be appointed to consider what ought to be done in the case. This rigorous confinement affected his health, and he fell dangerously ill, in consequence of which some of his relatives applied for his removal to a more convenient situation. The request was granted with an ill grace, after the examination of his physician as to the nature of his illness, and it was ordered that he should be transferred to the custody of the sergeant-at-arms. But this favour, which had not been solicited with Murray's consent, he refused to accept, and expressed the warmest resentment against his friends for asking it. He accordingly remained in Newgate until the close of the session terminated the authority of parliament, and was then conducted to his own house with a triumphal procession, headed by the sheriffs of London, and followed by a vast number of persons with streamers and flags. The impolicy of such violent persecutions to maintain the dignity of the commons was lamented by all reflecting men. Instead of elevating the influence of the representatives of the people, they had the opposite effect, of producing a universal sentiment of jealousy and distrust.*

* The sequel of this case was still more remarkable than its origin and progress. In the following session, viscount Coke, a young nobleman whose character entitled him to little attention amongst men of sense and honour, moved that Mr. Murray should be again committed. Such a proceeding had never been attempted before, and was asserted by those who opposed the motion to involve the exercise of a new power. But the impetuosity of the majority was not to be stayed by considerations of that kind, and the motion was carried. Mr. Murray, however, left the kingdom, and thus evaded the sergeant-at-arms. In this dilemma, an address was agreed upon to his majesty, praying that he would issue a proclamation offering a reward for his apprehension, which was accordingly done. About the same time a pamphlet was published containing a history of the whole case, and appealing from the tyranny of the commons to the good sense of the country. This pamphlet was immediately declared by the house to be

The supplies, as usual, led to a succession of angry debates; but ministers carried their demands in nearly all instances. The number of seamen were reduced to 8000, notwithstanding the opposition of Pitt, Lyttleton, and Grenville, but the standing forces were continued at 18,857 effective men. Large sums were granted for a variety of purposes, amounting, on the whole, to 5,125,023*l.* 11*s.* 7*d.*

While parliament was in the midst of its labours, the prince of Wales, to the general regret of the nation, died of pleurisy on the 20th of March, in the forty-fifth year of his age. In consequence of this event, the heir-apparent being a minor, the duke of Newcastle presented a bill to the house of peers for appointing the princess-dowager of Wales guardian of the heir-apparent, and regent of Great Britain, in the event of the demise of the reigning sovereign before his successor should attain the age of eighteen. While this bill was in progress his majesty sent down a message, recommending the settlement of a council of regency, with the duke of Cumberland at its head, the remaining members to consist of the high officers of state. This addition to the measure was resisted with uncommon fervour in the lower house. Such a council of regency, it was asserted, would clog the machine of government, and it was even hinted that it was not wholly free from danger to place at its head a prince of the blood, who, with the army at his command, was suspected of a temper too ambitious to be intrusted with such a combination of powers. History was ransacked for instances of proud and cruel uncles, and John of Gaunt and Richard of Gloucester were cited as illustrations. But the bill passed with a few trivial alterations, and the

a scandalous libel, and his majesty was requested, in a second address, to order the attorney-general to prosecute the publishers. The question now came before a jury; and the house of commons had the mortification of finding that a tribunal of twelve unbiassed men acquitted the defendant, whose contumacy had been visited by the legislature with such vindictive extremities.

evils anticipated from it were happily averted. The king outlived the minority of his grandson.

Lord Harcourt and the bishop of Norwich were appointed governor and preceptor to the prince; but they had not held their offices very long, when circumstances occurred which induced them to resign; and they were succeeded by lord Waldegrave and the bishop of Lincoln. The real causes of this rupture are variously stated by different authorities, and it is not easy to decide who was to blame. It is said, on the one side, that lord Harcourt and the bishop of Norwich attempted to form an interest independent of the princess, and presumed, on some occasions, to have an opinion of their own*; and on the other side it is asserted, that the princess-dowager wanted to obtain the complete government of her son; that the sub-governor and sub-preceptor were jacobites, and laboured to instil dangerous notions into the mind of the prince, and that books in vindication of the illegal acts of the Stuarts were found in his hands.† According to one set of statements, the bishop was a conceited pedant, of a haughty temper, and uncourteous manners ‡, who formed a plot to undermine the influence of the princess, in which he persuaded lord Harcourt to join him; according to other statements they were both men of high principles and character §, and whenever they ventured to have an opinion of their own, it was from anxiety for their charge, whose education had been grievously neglected ||, and to rescue him from jacobite advisers, one of whom at least had been appointed through the recommendation of Bolingbroke.¶ The latter account is, probably, entitled to credit; for there is no doubt that the charge of jacobitism was offered to be substantiated by Harcourt, who did not hesitate to lay it before the king, and that an inquiry on the sub-

* Waldegrave, Memoirs from 1754 to 1758.
† Melcombe, Diary.
‡ Orford, Memoirs, vol. i.
§ Belsham, vol. iv.
|| Orford, vol. i.
¶ Melcombe, Diary.

ject was stifled in the house of lords in a way that leaves a very unfavourable impression against the accused. Lord Waldegrave's account of the young prince, when that nobleman succeeded to Harcourt's office, tends to confirm the supposition that his education had been designedly neglected or perverted. "I found his royal highness," says he, "uncommonly full of princely prejudices, contracted in the nursery, and improved by the society of bed-chamber women and pages of the back stairs." To this he adds, "As a right system of education seemed quite impracticable, the best that could be hoped for was to give him true notions of common things; to instruct him by conversation rather than books; and sometimes, under the disguise of amusement, to entice him to the pursuit of more serious studies."* The correctness of this account is attested by the princess-dowager herself, who, in a conversation with Dodington, describes her son as "very honest, but childish, and not forward of his age, and not particularly attached to any body about him, except to his brother Edward;" a circumstance upon which she congratulates herself, because "the young people of quality were so ill educated, and so very vicious, that they frightened her."† It has been said that the princess gave him a bad opinion of every body, in order that nobody should gain his favour from her. But, without assuming the truth of such a suspicion, it appears tolerably certain that the heir-apparent was surrounded by people ill qualified to train him for the throne, and that the people of England had no reason to regret the longevity of the monarch, since it preserved them from the regency of the dowager-princess of Wales.

The remaining proceedings of the session were of little public interest. A measure was in progress, through the commons, for naturalising all foreign protestants who should settle in Great Britain; but as it was decidedly unpopular, advantage was taken of the death of

* Waldegrave, Memoirs. † Melcombe, Diary.

the prince of Wales, which happened on the day appointed for the third reading, to let it drop. The ministry were divided upon this bill, which was supported by Pitt and Lyttleton, and opposed by lord Egmont and Fox. The only principle it involved was an ill-understood doctrine of political economy; that an increase of hands would have the effect of overwhelming the industrial operations of the country.

Both houses of parliament were thrown into consternation by a printed paper, entitled "Constitutional Queries, earnestly recommended to the serious Consideration of every true Briton," which had been anonymously enclosed to nearly all the members. It was brought under the notice of the peers by the duke of Marlborough, who very absurdly moved for a conference with the commons on the subject. A conference accordingly took place, and it was decided that the paper was a seditious and malignant libel, and should be burned "by the hands of the common hangman in New Palace Yard." This sentence was formally executed; but although infinite pains were taken to discover the author, printer, or publisher, the vengeance of the legislature expired at the stake.

It ought to be recorded amongst the acts of the session, that upon the motion of lord Chesterfield the calendar, hitherto regulated by the Julian computation, was corrected according to the Gregorian. A bill to this effect was introduced, by which it was decreed, that the new year should begin on the 1st of January, and that eleven intermediate nominal days between the 2d and 14th of September, 1752, should be omitted, so that the day succeeding the 2d should be denominated the 14th. This arrangement was obviously calculated to simplify commercial correspondence, while it made the calendar of England harmonise with that of Europe. But the duke of Newcastle, clinging with characteristic superstition to the established usage, disapproved of the measure, because he was "averse to disturb that which was at rest, and did not love *new-fangled things*."

Death was busy at this period amongst royalties. In the preceding summer, Juan V. of Portugal, a bigot and a persecutor, died. Two very revolting marriages shortly followed in the family, for the sake of preserving the sceptre in the house of Braganza. The infanta Isabel, heiress of the crown, was married to her uncle, don Pedro; and the first issue of the nuptials, Joseph Zavier, prince of Brazil, while yet of an immature age, was married to his aunt, donna Maria.

In the October of the present year, the prince of Orange died; and his death, at an interval of two months, was followed by that of his sister-in-law, the queen of Denmark, youngest daughter of the king of England. About the same time Frederic, king of Sweden and landgrave of Hesse-Cassel*, expired at a good old age, and was succeeded by Adolphus Frederic, duke of Holstein-Eutin. This was the only royal demise that affected the interests of Europe. The new king pledged himself, by a voluntary oath in full senate, that he would never introduce any despotic authority, but would govern the kingdom according to the established law—a declaration which had the happiest effect in averting the hostile interference of Russia in the internal affairs of Sweden, for the czarina was resolved to maintain inviolate a constitution of which she was the guarantee. It was a part of the policy of Russia to keep Sweden in a state of domestic depression, which was most readily accomplished under the disguise of maintaining the existing constitution.

Parliament re-assembled in November. His majesty announced the conclusion of treaties with the electors of Bavaria and Saxony, in addition to those which had already been entered into with Mayence and Cologne. Another

* His majesty was married to the princess Mary, third daughter of the king of England, and afterwards renounced his religion, and became a Roman catholic, to the great mortification of his protestant allies. During the course of his reign, he received from England, in his capacity of elector of Hesse-Cassel, subsidies to the incredible amount of 1,249,699*l.*

was soon afterwards settled with the elector-palatine, and handsome sums were voted for the purchase of these new friendships. The object of so many Germanic alliances, apparently remote from the actual interests of the country, was to secure, at the approaching election of a king of the Romans, a majority of voices for the archduke Joseph, son of the emperor, as a preliminary step to secure his succession to the imperial dignity. It was not to be expected that an English house of commons would tacitly submit to a heavy expenditure for a speculation resting on such contingencies, and accordingly a resolute resistance was made to the ratification of the treaties. The arguments of the opposition, although not sustained with much talent, were striking. Lord Egmont declared himself an enemy to subsidy-treaties in times of peace, because the views of nations and kings were perpetually changing, as in the last war, when England was deserted by the Danes, and the Hessians actually took the field against her. Sir John Hynde Cotton, an uncompromising tory, observed, that granting subsidies to the German electors would furnish France with a plausible pretext for asserting that the liberties of the empire were invaded by bribery and corruption, and might incite her to undertake the defence of the Germanic constitution, which she was entitled to do as one of the guarantees of the treaty of Westphalia: as to the election of a king of the Romans, he was of opinion that the German princes ought to be left entirely to themselves. It was urged by other speakers that it was impolitic to grant these subsidies, as, when the whole electoral college was taken into pay, they would be very likely to postpone the election from time to time, on a variety of pleas, until the death of the emperor, for the sake of having the subsidies renewed and continued; and, finally, it was averred, that the officious and invidious interposition of Great Britain, instead of having the effect of preventing, would probably provoke an intestine war; for the two colleges of the diet who continued in-

dependent would certainly join France in protesting against an election under such circumstances.

Some of these predictions were very nearly realised by the event. The elector of Mayence, chancellor of the empire, after some delay, convoked an electoral diet. This was the moment for the king of Prussia, in his capacity of elector of Brandenburg, to protest publicly against a measure which he had all along strenuously opposed through his ministers. He declared that the contemplated election was an express violation of the constitution of the empire, and the treaty of Westphalia; that nothing but long absence, illness, or sudden emergency, which could not then be pretended to exist, could legalise the election of a king of the Romans during the lifetime of the emperor; that should the imperial crown descend to a minor many mischiefs must ensue; that an election under such circumstances would be incompatible with the liberties of the empire and the rights of the princes; and that the imperial dignity would become virtually changed from an elective to an hereditary succession, perpetuated in one family, which must be thus aggrandised to the prejudice of its co-estates, and the manifest subversion of the constitution of the empire. The justice of this protest was felt at once, and the machinery of a project that had cost so much to bring it even to this point was instantly suspended. Several of the electors wavered; the elector of Cologne openly renounced the subsidy treaty; and the king of France declared that, although he would not oppose the election provided it were confirmed by the unanimous consent of the college, yet should any one of the members dissent, and claim his protection, he could not refuse his assistance as one of the guarantees of the treaty of Westphalia. The design was consequently abandoned; but not until repeated efforts were made to remove the objections of the king of Prussia, whose unalterable determination drew from the emperor many bitter expressions of resentment. It was hinted that his majesty harboured a secret design of offering himself as a candidate for the

imperial throne; but his explicit retort, that England had, by the influence of her subsidies, embarrassed and embroiled the affairs of Germany, in which she had no right to interfere, was something more to the purpose.

Several useful laws were enacted this year in reference to trade and morals. The following may be enumerated: —An act for allowing the importation of wool and woollen yarn from Ireland; an act for licensing pawnbrokers, and effectually preventing the reception of stolen goods; another, for preventing thefts and robberies by suppressing all places of entertainment, dancing, and music in Londbn, Westminster, and within twenty miles of the capital, except such as the justices of the peace should think proper to license; another for annexing the forfeited estates in Scotland to the crown, and providing for the civilisation of the highlands out of the rents; and an important bill for converting into joint-stocks of annuities, chargeable on the sinking fund, several different portions of the national debt, which had hitherto occasioned considerable trouble and expense by being charged on a variety of funds. The estimates for this year were diminished, by the economy of the administration, to something less than 4,000,000*l.*; the number of seamen was increased to 10,000; and the army was continued at the same strength as last year. 1752.

Two feeble, but well-intended, attempts were made by the opposition to diminish the military power of the sovereign, and to obtain a parliamentary expression of opinion on the subject of foreign treaties. The former was a plan for increasing the efficiency of the militia, the final aim of which was to reduce the necessity for a large standing army. It was assiduously canvassed in a committee of the whole house of commons, and thrown out by the court party. The latter was a motion made in both houses for an address to his majesty, entreating that, in time of public tranquillity, he would be graciously pleased to avoid entering into subsidiary treaties with foreign powers. The recent treaties amply justified this motion; but it was held to be an infringement of the

royal prerogative, and negatived in each instance without a division. The parliament was prorogued at the end of March; and his majesty, as usual, went to Hanover, bequeathing the kingdom, in his absence, to a regency.

A new source of discord sprung up at this juncture between the courts of Berlin and London, already heated by the feuds arising from the Roman election, and ripe for any pretext to fan their animosities into an open quarrel. The king of Prussia directed his resident in London to present a memorial to the British ministry, complaining that eighteen Prussian ships and thirty-three neutral vessels in which Prussian subjects were concerned, had been unjustly seized by English privateers; and demanding, in a haughty and peremptory tone, reparation for the damages, which he estimated at a considerable sum. While this memorial was pending he discontinued the payment of the Silesian loan, to which he was liable under an article of the treaty of Breslaw. This loan amounted to 250,000*l.*, and had been incurred by Charles VI., who borrowed that sum from the subjects of Great Britain, at six per cent. interest, mortgaging the silver mines in Silesia for the repayment of the principal. The mines having devolved to the king of Prussia subject to this encumbrance, he became responsible for the payment of the interest, which he had discharged with regularity up to this period. The answer of the British cabinet to his complaint, and the demand by which it was accompanied, placed the subject in a new light. It proved, by an elaborate examination of the facts, that many of the statements contained in the memorial were erroneous, and that some of the Prussian vessels had been justly condemned; and it denied the right of Prussia to assess the damages in any case, captures by sea falling properly under the cognisance of those powers within whose jurisdiction the seizures were made. With respect to the Silesian loan, the British cabinet stated that it was a private transaction, which, even in the event of a war, would be held sacred and inviolable; that the debt being

transferable, was now diffused into different countries, and had become the property of others besides the subjects of Great Britain; and that, agreeably to the arrangement entered into with the emperor, the whole loan should have been repaid in 1745, and, therefore, must be considered, in any view of the case, unaffected by the facts specified in the memorial, all of which occurred posterior to that period. This temperate reply appeased the anger of the king of Prussia, who silently dropped the claim, and resumed the payment of the loan.

The return of the king of England from Hanover 1753.
was immediately followed by the opening of parliament on the 11th of January. His majesty's speech was unusually pointless and evasive, simply declaring that all his efforts had been directed to the preservation of the general peace, and that he was assured of a similar disposition in his allies; concluding these unmeaning sentences with recommending the attention of the legislature to the reduction of the national debt, the augmentation of the sinking fund, the improvement of the revenue, and the repression of disorders. A faint struggle was made to abolish the reverberating compliments of an address, in which the idle embellishments of the speech were faithfully reflected; but it had now become so customary to thank the sovereign in his own words, that the discussion ended in the unanimous adoption of the ministerial echo.

The labours of the minister in the effectual reduction of the public expenditure were crowned with a degree of success that justly entitled him to the confidence of the country. The whole supplies for the year did not exceed 2,133,000*l.*, although the land-tax was now reduced to two shillings in the pound; but the national debt at this time had reached the enormous amount of upwards of 74,000,000*l.*, while the sinking fund produced 1,735,530*l.*

As in the former session, several useful and some questionable enactments passed into laws; the tranquillity of the opposition allowing the government to proceed

without interruption in the prosecution of their measures. Under the former head may be mentioned an act for repressing the barbarous practices of the wreckers on the English coast; another, for the establishment of the British Museum, by the purchase of the Cottonian and Westminster libraries, the Harleian collection of MSS., and sir Han Sloane's museum and library; and a third, for throwing open the trade with Turkey, which had become a monopoly in the hands of a chartered company. Under the latter head may be included an act for the preservation of game, by which grouse and partridges were treated with more tenderness than poachers, the punishments and penalties being utterly disproportioned to the nature of the offence; a quarantine bill, which, however good in principle, was extremely oppressive and inconvenient in details; and a bill allowing an interest of three per cent. on the debentures for the bounty on the exportation of corn, during any interval in which the principal might remain unpaid — a measure that placed the home market at the mercy of the corn-dealers, by inducing them to export corn until they brought up the price to suit their own purposes.

But the most important measure of the session was an act for naturalising, under certain restrictions, persons of the Jewish persuasion, born out of the realm. The clamour excited by this bill, and the tenour of the arguments employed against it, afford a remarkable illustration of the spirit of the age. From the numerous petitions, especially that of the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, invariably distinguished throughout the whole of this period by the bigotry of their sentiments, and the speeches delivered on the opposition side, we gather the sum of the objections, apprehensions, and prejudices that were brought to bear upon the bill. It was urged that it would dishonour the Christian religion, endanger the constitution, and be highly prejudicial to the trade of the kingdom, and of London in particular; that it would deluge the

country with brokers, usurers, and beggars; that the rich Jews would purchase land and advowsons, while the poor would interfere with the industry of the Christian natives; that such an adoption of vagrants would rob Englishmen of their birthright; that the Jews would multiply so rapidly, acquire so much wealth, and engross so much influence, that they would at last become revered, their customs imitated, and Judaism established as the fashionable religion; and, in addition to all this, it was solemnly averred, that the act was a direct violation of the prophecy which declared that the Jews should be a scattered people until they were converted from their infidelity, and gathered into the land of their forefathers. Objections of this description, based on chimerical hypotheses, and of no more validity than any other bare and highly improbable assertions, contained their own answers. If it were competent to the one side to predict that the naturalisation of the Jews would overturn the church and state, it was equally competent to the other side to predict that it would strengthen and consolidate them, by the introduction and gradual conversion of opulent foreigners. As to the violation of the prophecy, who was to decide upon the manner of its fulfilment? Was the English legislature to take that awful responsibility into its own hands, and to desecrate the justice and charity of Christianity, in order to insure the accomplishment of the Jewish curse? The charge of usury was the very last that ought to have been brought by the enemies of the Jews. What made the Jews usurers? "That system of proscription and oppression, which, prohibiting them from acquiring freeholds, and from embarking in the ordinary enterprises of honourable ambition, compelled them to confine their operations to the trade in money, — the only trade they were permitted to carry on with impunity, and which presented to them the only investment for the fruits of their industry, which the law left unclosed upon them. Is it to be believed that the humanity of a Jew is different from the humanity of a

Christian? or that, if legislation threw open the field of legitimate exertion to him, he would not, like other men, cast his ventures upon the deep, cultivate the earth, and aspire, through all laudable channels of toil and speculation, for the rewards to which his talents or his skill might fairly entitle him? To reproach the Jew for usury, is to reproach him for the demoralisation of our own laws. The reproach should rather have come from him, against that code, which, narrowing the sphere of his movements within such circumscribed limits, afforded him no other resource, and which confirmed him in his persecuted faith, by clothing Christianity in a robe of terrors.

Notwithstanding the intemperate resistance which was made to this bill in parliament, the furious excitement it produced out of doors, and the danger of provoking the hostility of the people on the eve of a general election,—a circumstance which lord Egmont, with more candour than tact, urged upon the attention of government*,—the ministers persevered with the measure, and carried it triumphantly through both houses. But the gleam of liberality vanished into darkness almost as quickly as it appeared; for in the following session the turbulence of the zealots rose to such a height, that it became imperative upon the administration to destroy the beneficent work of their own hands. The bill was repealed by its authors—an unavoidable sacrifice to popular prejudice.

Some agitation was also occasioned by a bill for the prevention of clandestine marriages, brought into the house of lords under the auspices of lord Hardwicke, lord chancellor. It appeared that clandestine marriages had latterly increased to a grievous extent, producing great misery in numerous wealthy and aristocratic fami-

* "I am amazed," said his lordship, "that this consideration makes no impression. When that day, which is not far off, shall arrive, I shall not fear to set my foot on any ground of election in the kingdom, in opposition to any one man among you, or any new Christian, who has voted or appeared in favour of this naturalisation." His lordship, it seems, calculated confidently on the bigotry of the electoral masses.

lies, precipitating early unions, and leading ultimately to vice and wretchedness in an endless variety of forms. To prevent this growing evil, and to destroy the extraordinary facilities which existed for its encouragement through the agency of dissolute and vagrant clergymen, the bill enacted, that all marriages should henceforth take place either by banns or licence, and that all other marriages should be void, and the person solemnizing them transported for seven years. These principal conditions were fenced round by a number of safeguards and provisions, that helped to complicate the process of marriage*, and, as some of the opponents of the measure asserted, to produce, in consequence, evils of another kind. The subject was not entertained as a party question, and the members of the administration took different sides in the debate, according to their individual convictions. All parties agreed upon the necessity of preventing clandestine marriages, but it was strongly maintained that the abuse might be removed by a measure which should throw fewer restrictions and difficulties in the way of legitimate marriages. It was feared that such restrictions would promote mercenary matches, to the ruin of domestic happiness and the prejudice of posterity,—that they would check the diffusion of property, by restraining the wealth of the kingdom within the pale of the opulent families, who, under these regulations, would intermarry amongst themselves,—and that they would produce serious inconveniences to the poor, arising from the expense and trouble attendant on the prescribed forms. Unusual eagerness and heat were manifested in both houses; and when the bill was sent down to the commons, it was attacked with considerable asperity, especially by Fox, who reflected severely upon the measure and its chief promoter, lord Hardwicke. On the third reading, Fox softened his personal allusions; but when the bill was returned to the

* "It was so drawn up by the judges," says Horace Walpole in a letter to sir Horace Mann, "as to clog matrimony in general."

lords with amendments, the chancellor disclaimed the recantation, and retaliated so fiercely, that it was generally supposed Fox would be dismissed.* He expressed his surprise that the bill should have been styled, out of doors, an absurd, cruel, scandalous, and wicked proceeding. With regard to his own share in it, he declared he was obliged to those who had so honourably defended him; "so," he continued, "I despise the invective, and I despise the retractation; I despise the scurrility, and I reject the adulation." †

The bill passed with large majorities; and, although it was felt to be burthensome in its operation, it did not appear to be productive of so much practical inconvenience as its opponents apprehended. Parliament was prorogued shortly after.

Amongst the incidents of the year which assist us to a clearer conception of the character of the times, the execution of Dr. Cameron, brother to Cameron of Lochiel, chief of one of the warlike tribes that had taken the field with the pretender, stands out conspicuously. After the battle of Culloden, Cameron, who was wounded in that engagement, effected his escape to the Continent, accompanied by his brother, Dr. Cameron, who had never taken any part in the contest, but who was included in the act of attainder passed against those who had been concerned in the rebellion. Circumstances subsequently induced him to revisit Scotland, — as some said, to obtain a sum of money belonging to the pretender, and according to others, on a secret mission from the king of Prussia; but, whatever was the cause, the interval that had elapsed since the rebellion inspired him with hopes that the vengeance of the royalists had subsided. In

* Horace Walpole to George Montagu.

† Parl. Hist. Hardwicke Papers. Dr. Birch, in a letter to the honourable Philip Yorke, tells us, that the account reached Fox while he was in Vauxhall Gardens with some ladies, and that, breaking from them, and collecting a little circle of young members of parliament and others, he told them with great eagerness, that he wished the session had lasted only a fortnight longer, for then he would have made ample returns to the lord Chancellor. The speaker was of opinion, that if the commons had not been prorogued, some notice would have been taken of lord Hardwicke's speech.

this expectation he was deceived. Being accidentally discovered, he was apprehended, conducted to London, tried, and executed. The humanity of the people was outraged by this proceeding, which could not be defended on the grounds of necessity or utility; and which, superfluous for the ends of justice, was regarded as an act of sanguinary revenge. The king is said to have signed the warrant with reluctance, observing, "Surely there has been too much blood spilt upon this account already." The firmness of Cameron increased the sympathy in his fate*; and the populace that attended the melancholy scene at Tyburn, manifested, by their emotion, a strong aversion to the employment of such means for the establishment of the protestant succession.

While this ghastly spectacle was occupying for a brief session the thoughts of the people at home, the horizon of Europe was calm and serene. The court of Vienna, postponing its project upon the Roman crown to a more favourable opportunity, had just concluded a treaty with the duke of Modena, which, after a variety of stipulations on both sides, guaranteed the cession of the duchy to the house of Austria upon the extinction of the male branch of the house of Este. A petty dispute between Brandenburg and Hanover about East Friedland was referred for arbitration to the Aulic council; and a contemptible squabble between Hanover and the city of Munster, concerning some bailiwicks in the territories of Bremen, was brought to issue by the sequestration, on the part of the former, of some certain revenues belonging to the latter, until the claim should be

* On the evening before his execution, his wife visited him in the Tower, and his parting with her, says Horace Walpole, was heroic and tender; he let her stay till the last moment, when, being aware that the gates of the Tower would be locked, he told her so: she fell at his feet in agonies: he said, "Madam, this was not what you promised me," and embracing her, forced her to retire; then, with the same coolness, looked at the window till her coach was out of sight, after which he turned about and wept. His only concern seemed to be at the ignominy of Tyburn: he was not disturbed at the dresser for his body, or at the fire to burn his bowels. The crowd was so great, that a friend who attended him could not get away, but was forced to stay and behold the execution. Walpole adds, that the priest got into a landau, and let down the top for the better convenience of witnessing the execution!

allowed and settled. The only quarters in which the general repose seemed likely to be disturbed were in France, arising from the increasing dissensions between the clergy and the parliament, heightened by the king's espousal of ecclesiastical despotism against the voice of his subjects; and the English settlement in Nova Scotia, where a dispute had been for a long time going forward with the neighbouring French authorities in reference to the boundary line. In spite of the remonstrances of the English government with the court of Versailles, the French settlers countenanced the Indians in numberless lawless depredations; and even went so far, while the commissaries of both nations were sitting in deliberation on the question of limits, to construct a chain of forts over the disputed ground, and take several Englishmen prisoners, in furtherance of a premeditated plan of encroachments, which, by its very audacity, seemed to invite hostilities.

CHAP. XIV.

1753—1757.

TIMIDITY OF MINISTERS. — REPEAL OF THE JEWS NATURALISATION BILL. — DEATH OF MR. PELHAM. — DUKE OF NEWCASTLE APPOINTED PRIME MINISTER. — GENERAL ELECTION. — DIFFERENCES WITH THE IRISH PARLIAMENT. — CONTROVERSY IN FRANCE CONCERNING THE BULL UNIGENITUS. — AFFAIRS OF NOVA SCOTIA. — REMONSTRANCE OF THE ENGLISH AMBASSADOR. — HOSTILE PROCEEDINGS OF THE FRENCH IN AMERICA. — BRITISH FLEET OFF NEWFOUNDLAND MAKES REPRISALS ON FRANCE. — UNSUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS IN AMERICA. — ALLIANCES FORMED WITH HESSE-CASSEL, RUSSIA, AND PRUSSIA. — VIOLENT OPPOSITION TO THE TREATIES. — PITT AND HIS FRIENDS DISMISSED. — FOX APPOINTED SECRETARY OF STATE. — DISUNION IN THE CABINET. — HANOVERIAN MERCENARIES ARRIVE IN ENGLAND. — DESCENT ON MINORCA. — CONDUCT OF ADMIRAL BYNG. — MINORCA SURRENDERS TO THE FRENCH. — PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES. — RESIGNATION OF FOX AND THE DUKE OF NEWCASTLE. — TRIAL AND EXECUTION OF BYNG.

THE prospect of a difference with France, arising from the state of affairs in Nova Scotia, was clear to the British cabinet. The negotiations in progress on the subject with the court of Versailles, showed not merely the anxiety and impatience of the minister to bring the dispute to a conclusion, but his apprehension that it could not be concluded amicably. Yet, in the speech from the throne, on the opening of the session in November, no reference whatever was made to the subject. His majesty, on the contrary, was made to express himself confident of universal peace and security, and to congratulate parliament upon the fact that he had nothing particular to offer to its consideration in reference to foreign affairs. It is not easy to comprehend

the policy that dictated a speech so dangerous and delusive. The French had actually commenced hostilities, built forts on the territories of the British allies at Niagara and lake Erie, harassed the settlement of Nova Scotia, secretly assisted the Indians in their depredations and massacres, and risen in open rebellion against the British authority in Annapolis, where they were subject to the crown of England. These facts were known to the ministry, and expostulations had been repeatedly raised upon them, and hostile reprisals, on a small and inadequate scale, had already been put into effect. The omission of all reference to circumstances of a nature so alarming as to threaten not only a protracted and doubtful contest in the remote plains of America, but to render a war with France nearer home by no means improbable, could hardly be accounted for on any other ground than that of timidity. The elections were approaching. This was the last session of the parliament. It was necessary to avoid all topics of irritation, and even to impart a tone of security to subjects upon which much doubt and curiosity prevailed amongst the people. Retrenchments had been effected, and more were promised, and it was not a time to talk of war. Had this kind of deception been practised by Walpole, confiding in his diplomatic skill, his wide-reaching sagacity, and great personal influence, it would be intelligible as part of a system of profound ministerial wisdom;—with Pelham, who possessed all the credit that was due to honest intentions, upright actions, and good sense, it was a simple evasion of public opinion, about to explode at the hustings.

The anxiety of the minister to propitiate the constituencies betrayed him into the abandonment of the great principle, which he had defended in the preceding session at the risk of that very hostility he was now afraid to meet. The act for the naturalisation of the Jews had produced a strong sensation all over the kingdom, and the clamour became so violent that the Pelhams considered it prudent to sacrifice their luckless clients

to the expediency of the hour. The bill was accordingly repealed, and the discussions upon it presented this extraordinary anomaly, — that while all parties were unanimous against the Jews in the commons, an able but fruitless stand was made on their behalf in the lords. Nor did the horror of Hebrew toleration terminate here. There existed amongst the statutes an act by which persons professing the Jewish religion might become free citizens of Great Britain, after having resided seven years in any of his majesty's colonies. Very few individuals had availed themselves of the rights to which they were entitled under this act, the prosecution of the claim being in all instances attended with considerable trouble and expense. Notwithstanding, however, the practical inoperativeness of this act of grace, an attempt was made, in the lower house, to obtain its repeal. But Pelham was not prepared to go quite so far in the crusade against conscience, and, supported by Pitt, he defeated the motion.

The business of the session was as placid as the speech 1754.
by which it was opened. The only question that produced an animated discussion, was the continuation of the land forces. An amendment to reduce the number was proposed, but, as usual, negatived. The estimates were voted without opposition, the supply for the year exhibiting a small excess above that of the previous year and the labours of the parliament ended in April.

A few weeks before the close of the session, the death of Mr. Pelham deprived the ministry of its zealous and thrifty chief.* The appointment of a successor set in motion all the engines of party intrigue. Amongst the candidates, three distinguished men stood prominently

* On the day of Mr. Pelham's death, a splendid edition in five volumes of Bolingbroke's Works appeared. Garrick supplied the following epigram on the occasion : —

"The same sad morn, to church and state
(So for our sins 't was fix'd by fate)
A double shock was given :
Black as the regions of the North,
St. John's fell genius issued forth,
And Pelham's fled to Heaven!"

before the country,—Pitt, Fox, and Murray, the solicitor-general. They were the best speakers in the house. Pitt was a great master of satire and ridicule; Fox possessed extraordinary eloquence; and Murray excelled Fox as an orator and Pitt as a debater. But Murray was ineligible on account of the known Jacobite tendencies of his family*; and the choice lay between Pitt and Fox. The duke of Newcastle, who felt the necessity of consulting one of them, was secretly resolved to exclude both.

The king's prejudices against Pitt afforded a sufficient excuse for not applying to him in the first instance; and lord Hartington was accordingly sent with proposals from the duke of Newcastle to Fox. It soon became evident, however, that the negotiation was insincere; the duke of Newcastle took occasion to retract part of his offers, and Fox declined an office which was unaccompanied with the confidence of the sovereign. This was exactly what the duke of Newcastle desired. Fox's refusal exasperated the king; and the duke, who represented it to his majesty in the most invidious spirit, was made first lord of the treasury. The place of secretary of state was conferred upon sir Thomas Robinson, a man sufficiently competent for the business of his office, but of no parliamentary talents or experience. Mr. Legge was appointed chancellor of the exchequer, and several minor changes took place, in the progress of which Murray succeeded to the office of attorney-general.

* Murray's brother was prime minister to the pretender, with the nominal title of earl of Dunbar. Lord Orford gives the following account of him in his "Mémoires." "He was a man of artful abilities, graceful in his person and manners, and very attentive to please. He had distinguished himself before he was of age, in the last parliament of queen Anne, and chose to attach himself to the unsuccessful party abroad, for whose re-establishment he had co-operated. He was, when still very young, appointed governor to the young princes: but growing suspected by the warm Jacobites of some correspondence with sir Robert Walpole, and not entering into the favourite project of prince Charles's expedition to Scotland, he thought fit to leave that court, and retire to Avignon, where, while he was regarded as lukewarm to the cause, from his connection with the solicitor-general here, the latter was not at all less suspected of devotion to a court where his brother had been so long first minister."

Pitt and Fox were left in their subordinate employments, and their mutual dissatisfaction led to explanations of the arts that had been used to inspire them with jealousy towards each other. Their rivalry for power produced sympathy in disappointment, that ended in a sort of coalition against their colleagues. Without openly opposing their measures, they contrived, in debates upon collateral questions, to cover the secretary with ridicule, and throw the weight of their influence upon the side of the opposition, while they voted with the government.*

The elections passed off quietly while these alterations were in progress, and the new parliament was composed of nearly the same materials as the last; but the incapacity of the Newcastle administration to wield its majorities with advantage to the country soon became manifest.

A question of disputed prerogative long pending between the Irish parliament and the imperial government, but which had been judiciously settled by the influence of Mr. Pelham, was unnecessarily revived by the rashness of his successor. In the year 1749, there was a considerable surplus in the Irish exchequer, and the commons, conceiving that they had an undoubted right to apply such surplus to national purposes, prepared a bill, the preamble of which set forth that it would be for the ease of his majesty's subjects in that kingdom, if so much as could be conveniently spared of the surplus were paid in discharge of the national debt. When this bill was transmitted to England, the advocate of the royal prerogative asserted that the commons of Ireland had no right to apply any part of the unappropriated surplus, or even to take into consideration the propriety of its

* "Though ministers," says lord Waldegrave, "had, in every division, a great majority, many of their steadiest voters were laughers, at least, if not encouragers, on the opposite side of the question." — *Memoirs.* The truth was, sir Thomas Robinson's speeches exposed the whole party to ridicule and contempt. Whenever he attempted to speak, which was very frequently, he delivered himself so absurdly, that even his friends could hardly preserve a composure of countenance.

appropriation, without the previous consent of the crown. In the ensuing session of 1751, the duke of Dorset, viceroy in Ireland, in his speech from the throne, informed the Irish parliament that his majesty would graciously *consent*, and *recommend* that the surplus should be applied to the reduction of the national debt. The commons, resenting the employment of the word *consent*, omitted it from the address, and from the bill which was subsequently framed for the appropriation of the surplus, adopting simply his majesty's *recommendation*. The bill, being submitted in the usual way to the ministers in England, was sent back altered by the re-introduction of the obnoxious word. The commons, unwilling to prolong the contest, suffered it to pass without further commentary. Here the matter rested on the death of Mr. Pelham; nor did any necessity exist for reviving a dispute which the temperance of the Irish parliament had already drawn to an amicable termination. But the duke of Newcastle, anxious to make a display on the side of prerogative, instructed the duke of Dorset to repeat the unpalatable expression in the speech at the opening of the present session, throwing the firebrand once more into an inflammable assembly. The result was, an address, in which not only the word *consent* was omitted, but the ordinary expressions of grateful acknowledgment. The bill, founded on this address, was similarly drawn up. When it was submitted to the cabinet in England, it excited the utmost astonishment, and its contumacious omissions were indignantly supplied by a preamble, in which the forms urged by the minister were explicitly retained. The bill, thus deformed, was transmitted back to the Irish parliament; but the spirit of resistance was wrought to its height by the insulting interpolation; the bill was thrown out by a majority of five; and the defeat of the government was celebrated by general rejoicings. Ministers took the only revenge in their power, by dismissing all those having public employments who voted against the bill. But the revenge of the opposition was more complete, and was not far

distant. The stagnation of money occasioned by the suspension of the payments to the public creditors, produced such well-grounded complaints, that, to avoid still greater evils, the government was compelled to submit, and to devote the surplus to the satisfaction of the debt, by a letter under the king's hand. Such was the first exhibition of the new ministry,—an exhibition which afforded ample sources of congratulation to their secret enemies as well as their public opponents.

Parliament was called together on the 30th of May, and dismissed on the 5th of June; the lord chancellor informing both houses that his majesty did not consider it necessary to direct their attention to the affairs of the nation until they met in winter. The duke of Newcastle was not yet prepared to encounter the opposition, growing sturdy as the power of the cabinet diminished. He required time to organise his plans, and, above all, to settle the disturbances in America, that he might have some tangible proposition to submit to the representatives of the people. The domestic feuds raging at this period in France, seemed to render it a favourable moment for bringing the colonial quarrel to a conclusion.

These feuds arose out of a spirit of religious bigotry and persecution that had taken possession of the heads of the church, and, provoking the resistance of the parliament, had ultimately convulsed the whole kingdom. The objects of ecclesiastical denunciation were the writings of Cornelius Jansen, who flourished about the middle of the last century, and who ventured to adopt a liberal interpretation of some of the tenets of the schools—especially grace, predestination, and free-will,—and to insist upon the necessity of a free perusal of the Scriptures. These doctrines were not new. They had been espoused long before by St. Augustine; and the learned doctors of the Sorbonne had adopted them in the spirit, if not in the letter. But papal authority took alarm at the spreading popularity of the enlightened heresy, and fulminations were thundered from St. Peter's, at various intervals, against the book

and its readers. The Jansenists, however, continued to increase, and at last it was considered necessary by Clement XI., at the beginning of the present century, to issue a bull denouncing expressly 101 specific propositions selected from the writings of Jansen, and requiring the faithful to condemn them, "not only with their mouths, but in their hearts." This celebrated bull, historically known as the bull Unigenitus*, was received by the Gallican church, and promulgated under the authority of the king. The controversy from this time took a new form. Hitherto it was theological, — it was now suddenly converted into a political contention, widening the ground of argument, and supplying weapons from the armoury of the constitution. The clergy, especially the Jesuits, ranged themselves on the side of the Roman see; the parliaments — that of Paris being particularly distinguished in the contest — resisted the bull as an infringement on public liberty. From these two hostile lines diverged a third, in the person of the king, who was soon drawn into the tumult.

At the head of the church party was the archbishop of Paris, a haughty scourging prelate, who carried his zeal for the damnatory bull to such an excess as to command the clergy to withhold the sacrament, *in articulo mortis*, from all persons refusing to subscribe to it. This iniquitous injunction was in many instances obeyed; but the parliament, interposing its authority, caused several ecclesiastics to be apprehended for illegal conduct, severely censuring the archbishop, and commencing a special prosecution against the bishop of Orleans. The court interfered, and stopped the proceedings. This assault on the privileges of parliament was the precursor of a protracted contest between the throne and the representatives of the people. Parliament remonstrated repeatedly, asserting their right to denounce and execute jugdment on delinquents; but the king as often renewed his prohibition, and declared his deter-

* So called because Unigenitus was the first word it contained.

mination to enforce the obnoxious bull, with all the penalties added to it by the hierarchy. Finding it useless to reiterate protests and prayers, the parliament resolved that the several chambers should remain assembled, but that all public business should be suspended so long as evil-minded persons prevented truth from reaching the throne. Indignant at this act of contumacy, the king issued a mandate, calling on the parliament to revoke this resolution; but they answered that they could not, without committing a violation of their oaths. Driven to the last refuge of despotism, his majesty ordered *lettres de cachet* to be put in force against the members, who were immediately banished to distant provinces; and a temporary chamber, subsisting wholly by the royal will, was instituted for the administration of justice. In all struggles of this description, in which the passion and lawlessness of the sovereign are set against the established constitution of a nation, the sovereign must capitulate in the end, or, forcing matters to extremities, reduce himself to the humiliation and the danger of a disgraceful defeat. The motives and means gradually become more clearly defined, and at length the feud takes the definite form of a civil war, narrowed on the one side to a single tyranny, and widening on the other until it embraces the whole people.

To this point the dispute was now rapidly advancing. It was necessary to authenticate the proceedings of the new chamber, by registering the letters patent,—a function expressly belonging to the parliament of Paris. An inferior court was applied to; but the counsellors, declaring their incompetency to comply with the demand, were committed to the Bastile. The severity of these proceedings only inflamed still more violently the resentment of the provincial parliaments, who continued to present spirited remonstrances to the throne in justification of the parliament of Paris, and to prosecute the intolerant clergy with unremitting vigour. The country was in open revolt; the fulminations of the church, no

longer available as instruments of terror or superstition, had no other effect than to stimulate the zeal of the people in defence of their civil liberties; and the king, unable to resist the power his infatuation had called into existence, and having already exhausted all his resources, submitted to the necessity he could no longer control. The parliament of Paris were recalled, and entered the city with an ovation; and the archbishop, now become the victim in turn of the frenzy of the monarch, was ignominiously banished to Charenton.

If the king had remained faithful to this arrangement, and acted with integrity towards his subjects, the internal peace of France would have been restored. The people, content with the restitution of legitimate rights, required no further concessions. But the Roman pontiff, incensed at the indifference with which his authority was treated, resumed the contest after an interval of two years, issued a second bull consigning to eternal tortures all those who had rejected the bull Unigenitus, and confirming with the sanction of the holy see the refusal of the sacraments to the recusants. To give the greater efficacy to this revival of the religious persecution, the exiled archbishop was recalled. The parliament, strengthened by their recent triumph, issued an *arrêt* to suppress the bull; the strife with the king was renewed; but the force of public opinion was too powerful for the court, and his majesty was again compelled to bow to its supremacy.

In the midst of these contentions, the American boundary question was warmly discussed at the court of Versailles; and the earl of Albemarle, the English ambassador, submitted to the French ministry a peremptory remonstrance, in which the causes of complaint on the part of the English settlers were forcibly enumerated. But, in order to exhibit a clear view of the subject, it will be necessary to trace it from its origin.

The province of Nova Scotia was ceded to England by the treaty of Utrecht. But the verbal looseness of the clause in which this cession was expressed, left a

considerable portion of land open to dispute between the French and English colonists. According to the treaty, the cession was determined by the ancient limits of the province. The question was, What were the ancient limits of Nova Scotia? The English claimed the whole territory as far as the southern banks of the St. Lawrence; the French admitted their right only to the peninsula of Acadie. The French were favourably circumstanced for harrassing the English in detail by the colonies they already possessed on the St. Lawrence to the north, and on the Mississippi to the south of the English settlements. They concerted a deliberate plan for connecting those widely-separated establishments by a chain of fortresses from the lakes Erie and Ontario along the Ohio, and on to the embouchure of the Mississippi. Over the country stretching on the east side of that noble river they assumed a right of sovereignty, giving it the appellation of Louisiana, and contended that the English colonies were bounded by the lofty mountains that ran parallel with the coast at a distance of about 200 miles, called the Alleghany or Blue Mountains. Commissaries were appointed by both nations to adjust these differences; but while they were sitting in deliberation, the French still continued to work at their line of forts.

Another source of contention arose from a charter inconsiderately granted to a body of London merchants, who, under the title of the Ohio Company, claimed an exclusive privilege of commerce with the Indians in that neighbourhood. This very unwise measure excited the opposition of the American traders, who were thus deprived of a lucrative branch of traffic, and the native Indians, who were incensed at the presence of English surveyors, measuring and parcelling out their lands. The French governor of Canada, the marquis de Quesne, announced his determination not to permit any encroachments to be made on the possessions of those Indian tribes who were under the protection of the crown of France. Such was the state of affairs when the earl of

Albemarle pesented his memorial to the court of Versailles.

Several remonstrances in the meanwhile had been made in vain with the local French authorities; and major Washington, afterwards distinguished as the founder of the American republic, was commissioned, in 1753, by the government of Virginia to demand by what authority fortresses were erected on his Britannic majesty's territories, and to require that the works should be abandoned. But the French officer to whom this demand was addressed repudiated the right of the English government to interfere, referred Washington to the governor of Canada, and persisted in the performance of the duties with which he was entrusted.

The principal points insisted upon in the statement of the earl of Albemarle were, that while the commissaries were engaged in adjusting the limits, the French had taken possession of the lands in dispute; that they had assisted the Indians of Nova Scotia with military stores, and incited the French inhabitants of Acadie to rise in rebellion against the English authority, which, in that territory at least, they admitted to be lawful; that numerous fortresses were in progress of erection for the defence of the encroachments; and that acts of violence were constantly exercised towards the persons and property of British subjects. Upon these statements, distinct claims of redress and restitution were founded by the British minister. The reply of the French government was deprecatory and evasive; engaging to make inquiries into the subject, and to transmit such instructions as should obviate all future misunderstandings; liberating at the same time several British subjects who, under a variety of pretexts, had been seized by the colonial authorities.

This specious answer was held to be so unsatisfactory, that orders were immediately despatched to the English governors in America to resist force by force, and to compel the French to evacuate the banks of the Ohio. A congress was held at Albany, where it was resolved

that major Washington should proceed at once to the Ohio. Arrived at his destination with a small detachment of 400 men, he commenced the erection of a fort, daily expecting reinforcements to enable him to maintain it. While he was thus occupied, a superior force of French and Indians advanced upon him, and summoned him to surrender. His heroic spirit, undaunted by the numerical disproportion of his troops, spurned the alternative, and the fort, not yet half finished, was instantly attacked. He defended his position with a determination worthy of his fame; but resistance was idle against overwhelming battalions, and he was at last forced to capitulate, with permission to retire into Virginia. The real intentions of the French government now became apparent. When lord Albemarle represented these circumstances to the court at Versailles, they treated his remonstrances with indifference, and betrayed their hostile designs by sending fresh reinforcements to the garrison at Quebec.

The English minister, still unwilling to communicate the state of affairs to parliament, in the vain hope, probably, of effecting a settlement by peaceful negotiations, maintained a strict silence on the subject when the session opened in November; and it was not until all prospect of an amicable adjustment was at an end, that the actual necessity of augmenting the forces by land and sea was announced to the house of commons in the following March. The house responded eagerly to the de- 1755.
mand, and voted a million for the defence of the American colonies.

Intelligence having been received of a naval armament in preparation at Rochefort and Brest, destined for America, admiral Boscawen was appointed to the command of an equal force; and, for the purpose of obstructing the entrance to the gulf of St. Lawrence, he took his station off the banks of Newfoundland. The French fleet, however, evaded his vigilance under cover of the fogs, and only two vessels fell into his hands. This movement was at once construed into a declaration

of war. The ambassadors were recalled at both sides; the French complained violently of the infraction of the law of nations; and the English retorted that they were the original aggressors. In the course of the year, no less than 300 merchant ships, and 8000 sailors, were captured by the English.

The operations on shore were not so successful, owing to a variety of causes:—ignorance of the country and of the mode of warfare of the Indians, and the severity of the climate, which left but a few months in the year available to Europeans for military purposes. In the three ensuing campaigns, the English were discomfited in almost every instance. General Braddock, a brave disciplinarian, but wholly unacquainted with the scene of action, and foolishly despising the councils of the colonial officers, was surprised in a swamp by invisible Indians, who, coiled in the surrounding brakes, committed havoc upon his troops. In this disastrous situation, it was equally impossible to rally the disordered masses, or to return the fire of the enemy, who were still out of sight. Braddock fell in the midst of his flying soldiers, and Washington covered the retreat of the remnant of an army. Another expedition, commanded by sir William Johnson, was frustrated by a sudden attack of the French. On this occasion the English were the victors, but at such an enormous loss that they were forced to retrace their steps into a more secure situation. The siege of Niagara was contemplated, but abandoned from the difficulty of making the necessary preparations before the approach of winter. The disasters of the English were completed by the forced capitulation of Fort William-Henry on lake George. The garrison, consisting of 3000 men, were attacked with such vigour by the French, that articles were signed in six days, which prohibited them from serving against the king of France or his allies for a term of eighteen months. By this acquisition the French obtained the entire command of that vast chain of lakes which connects the St. Lawrence and the Mississippi.

The war having now become open between the two powers, great efforts were made by each to strengthen themselves by fresh alliances. Spain, solicited at both sides, resolved to remain neutral. The king of England entered into treaties with the landgrave of Hesse Cassel and the empress of Russia for the security of Hanover; and these were followed by a similar alliance with Prussia. France, filled with consternation by the defection of Prussia, applied to the court of Vienna, and, to the astonishment of Europe, succeeded in forming a treaty of mutual guarantee and support with the house of Austria, whose interests it had so long thwarted and opposed.

The treaties entered into for the defence of Hanover revived the old animosities about that troublesome pendant to the crown of England. The address, in answer to the speech from the throne in November, produced a clamorous discussion in reference to the passage which alluded to the treaties. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Legge, the most popular members of the administration, opposed it with great force and eloquence, and their example was followed by several gentlemen holding employments under the government. Pitt declared that the whole scheme was "flagrantly absurd and desperate: it was no other than to combine the powers of the Continent into an alliance of sufficient magnitude to withstand the efforts of France and her adherents against the electorate of Hanover, at the single expense of Great Britain. The three last wars with France," he exclaimed, "cost England above 120 millions of money; the present exhibits a prospect of an effusion of treasure still more enormous; and when we consider that such immense issues of money are to be supplied by new loans, heaped upon a debt of eighty millions, who will answer for the consequences, or venture to ensure us from a national bankruptcy?" The address was carried notwithstanding, and attempts were made to gain over Pitt. But he persisted in condemning the whole system of government, and gave the duke of Newcastle to understand

that he objected to the mode of carrying on business in the house of commons, insisting on having men of efficiency and authority in that assembly, who should have habitual, frequent, and familiar access to the crown, "that they might tell their own story, do themselves and their friends justice, and not be the victims of a whisper." * Such was the determination with which Pitt and his friends acted upon these feelings that Legge, as chancellor of the exchequer, refused to sign the first treasury warrant for the payment of the Hessian troops, on the ground that it was contrary to the act of settlement. In this extremity overtures were made to Fox, who, expressing his willingness to support the treaties, was made secretary of state in the room of Robinson, who was compelled by the force of circumstances to retire. Pitt and his friends were dismissed from office with the single exception of Lyttleton, who became chancellor.

The session that followed was distinguished by brilliant displays of eloquence on both sides. The new ministry was in all cases victorious; but its triumphs proceeded rather from the supremacy of Fox's genius than from the cordial co-operation of the members of the cabinet. The king, dissatisfied with the removal of sir Thomas Robinson on account of his intimate acquaintance with German politics, did not affect to conceal his mortification from the new secretary; while the duke of Newcastle treated him as an intruder, withheld all confidence from him, broke all the promises he had made to his friends, and laboured incessantly to weaken every part of the government under his superintendence. Fox was too much occupied in strengthening his connections to give the requisite attention to the duties of his office, for which the character of his talents in a great measure unfitted him; and in this disunited condition the ministry, carrying within itself the seeds of dissolution, prepared to meet the difficulties into which

* Melcombe, Diary.

the wavering policy of an incompetent administration had plunged the country.

The dedication of such immense sums to the purposes of devastation was agreeably relieved in this session by the vote of 100,000*l.* for the assistance of the sufferers by a terrible earthquake which had recently nearly destroyed the city of Lisbon. Ten thousand of the inhabitants were killed by the fall of buildings, or buried in the ruins, and the royal family escaped by a precipitate flight into the neighbouring fields. A message from the king announced this distressing calamity to parliament, and the generous contribution was promptly and unanimously agreed to.

The French ministry, affecting to consider the hostile 1756.
operations of the English squadron, without a previous declaration of war, contrary to the law of nations, explicitly demanded in a formal letter to Mr. Fox complete reparation for the injuries sustained. This demand was calmly but firmly refused; and orders were immediately issued by the French court to seize all British vessels in French harbours, and repair the fortifications of Dunkirk. From certain intimations in the channel, and the rapid gathering of troops towards the coast of Normandy, a general impression prevailed that the French contemplated an invasion of England, and a royal message to that effect was sent down to parliament. It was answered by an address declaratory of the warmest zeal and attachment; and Mr. Fox moved a second address, requesting that twelve battalions of his majesty's electoral troops might be forthwith embarked for England; which was carried by a large majority. In the course of the ensuing month these troops arrived.

This was the first time that foreign mercenaries had ever been introduced into England, and it provoked contemptuous commentaries throughout the whole of Europe. Nor was it passed over without a dignified censure from the commons. On the close of the session in May, speaker Onslow, presenting the money bills for he royal assent, observed, after referring to the liberality

of the grants, that "though ever attached to his majesty's person, nevertheless there were two circumstances existing, at which nothing but their confidence in his majesty's justice and love to his people could hinder them from being most seriously alarmed. Subsidies to foreign princes, when already burthened with a debt scarcely to be borne, cannot but be severely felt; an army of foreign troops — a thing unprecedented, unheard of, unknown, brought into England, cannot but alarm. Still they had reliance upon his majesty, and hoped that their burthens might be lightened, their fears removed as soon as possible; and, in the meantime, that the sword of these foreigners should not be entrusted a moment out of his own hand to any other person whatsoever."

It may be seriously doubted whether the French entertained the project of an invasion. Subsequent events tend to show that they merely encouraged that notion, or rather suffered it to go abroad uncontradicted, for the purpose of diverting attention from the point to which at this moment they were directing a naval armament—the island of Minorca. The agitation occasioned by the rumours answered all the purposes they desired, and their forces were actually engaged in the siege of fort St. Philip, when admiral Byng, who was despatched with a very inadequate squadron to the Mediterranean, arrived at Gibraltar. Under these circumstances the admiral, despairing of making any effectual movement, wrote home in despondency, but ministers insisted upon the discharge of his orders. He evidently approached the enemy, hopeless of success, allowed the ships to fall into irregularities after the signal for charging was given, and in consequence of keeping at too great a distance from the enemy, for the sake of preserving the "line of battle" entire, suffered the French commander, after a brief and partial engagement, to bear away under an easy sail. Orders were given to chase him, but it was too late. In this engagement three of the principal ships were considerably damaged, and upwards of 200 men were killed,

wounded, or disabled by sickness. A council of war was immediately held. The admiral represented his force to be much inferior to that of the enemy, and urged the impossibility of relieving the fort*; and it was consequently agreed by the officers present that the fleet should return to Gibraltar.†

When the account of this unfortunate affair reached ministers, admirals Hawke and Saunders were ordered to take the command in the Mediterranean, and Byng was put under arrest, and committed to close custody in Greenwich hospital on his arrival in England. Fort St. Philip, abandoned to its fate, was shortly afterwards compelled to capitulate; the garrison, however, after their valiant defence of the place, being permitted to march out with all the honours of war.

The consternation produced in England by these events, vented itself in a sentiment of implacable revenge against admiral Byng, who was accused of having betrayed the national honour and sacrificed Minorca. The rage of the people was unbounded, and ministers were deficient in the requisite courage to shield the unfortunate commander from the inevitable consequences of a blind and furious resentment, by making any public acknowledgment of the real causes of his failure. There was no doubt that the force sent out to the relief of Minorca was inadequate for the purpose.‡ Fox had in vain urged upon the duke of Newcastle the necessity of detaching a stronger squadron for the Mediterranean, but his grace suffered himself to be led by the arrogant declaration of lord Anson, that "Byng's squadron would

* General Blakeney, who commanded at Fort St. Philip, subsequently bore testimony to the correctness of this statement. See *Lord Orford's Memoirs*, passim.

† Lord Effingham, Cornwallis, lord Robert Bertie, and West were amongst the number who subscribed to this council of war.

‡ "However the case may be with regard to Byng, what can be the excuse for sending a force, which at the utmost is scarcely equal to the enemy, upon so important and decisive an expedition? Though in the venality of this hour, it may be deemed sufficient to throw the whole blame upon Byng, yet I will venture to say, the other is a question that, in the judgment of every impartial man, now and hereafter, will require a better answer, I am afraid, than can be given. I believe he was not reckoned backward in point of personal courage, which makes this affair the more extraordinary."—Grenville to Pitt: *Chatham Correspondence.*

beat any thing the French had or could have on that station." When the island was lost, Newcastle asserted that no blame could rest on him, as the sea was not his province; to which Fox replied that those who had the chief direction in an administration must bear the greatest share of the blame, and that whoever told him otherwise deceived him; that he had defended his grace in every thing where he could defend him; but in one thing he never could, which was in not believing that war was inevitable, and in not arming sooner.* This was the opinion of all dispassionate men. The original fault rested with ministers. Minorca ought to have been relieved earlier, and with a greater force.† Byng's failure, if it reflected some discredit upon himself, reflected more on the government. But it was necessary to destroy him in the unprincipled attempt to preserve a tottering administration.

The first public step that was taken to satisfy the frenzy of the people, was a motion for an inquiry in the house of commons into the causes of the loss of the island of Minorca. This motion was delayed through the winter on a variety of pretexts; and, at last, was carelessly dispatched in the commons. An enormous mass of documents were laid on the table, including all the despatches and official correspondence relating to the subject. One fact was clearly exhibited, that ministers had received intimations of the projected descent upon Minorca early enough to have enabled them to undertake its defence at least a month sooner than they did. Early in February, sir Benjamin Keene informed Mr. Fox of his suspicions of the approaching attack, arising from accounts of the assembly of large numbers of troops at Marseilles and on the coasts of the Mediterranean, to be transported in small vessels, under a convoy of twelve

* Melcombe, Diary.

† "All your questions," observes lord Orford to sir Horace Mann, "of why was not Byng sent sooner? Why not with more ships? Why was Minorca not supported earlier? All these are questions which all the world is asking as well as you, and to which all the world does not make such civil answers as you must, and to which I shall make none, as I really know none."—*Letters of Horace Walpole*, vol. iii.

ships from Toulon. This information was further attested about the same time by commodore Edgecumbe, who, writing from Leghorn, said that it was thought these preparations were intended for Minorca. Mr. Villettes, on the 2d of the same month, wrote from Berne to inform ministers that orders were everywhere proclaimed by trumpet for sailors to repair to Toulon to man the ships; and lord Bristol, then at Turin, positively assured lord Holdernesse, that the Toulon armament was to be ready by the beginning of April, and was destined for Minorca. These statements were finally confirmed by a letter from general Blakeney, in command of Fort St. Philip, who, on the 10th of February, assured Mr. Fox that, according to information received from France and Spain, there was great reason to believe the French intended very shortly to make an attack upon the island, and that it was publicly talked of at Marseilles and Barcelona. The intelligence, it appeared, had even penetrated to the place threatened by the armament; yet, in the face of these circumstances, and of the remarkable fact that admiral Byng's squadron did not leave England until the 7th of April, the house of commons, without waiting to digest the documents before them, the very dates of which, alone, filled three and twenty sheets of paper, agreed to two resolutions, which completely exempted ministers from all censure. The first of these resolutions affirmed, that from the intelligence repeatedly received by ministers there was just ground for supposing that an invasion of Great Britain or Ireland was actually intended by the French; and, the second, that no greater number of ships could, with safety to the kingdom, be spared for the Mediterranean than had been sent under the command of admiral Byng.* Such was the artifice resorted to for the purpose of screening ministers from their responsibility, although it was notorious that at the very time when Byng was ordered upon this important service

* This inquiry was not concluded until the following year; but for the sake of preserving the continuity of the subject, it is here given entire.

with ten or twelve ships of the line, there were upwards of one hundred and fifty ships of war in commission. It was to these facts lord Orford alluded, when he said, "It will be difficult to persuade posterity that all the shame of last summer was the fault of Byng.*

The loss of Minorca produced a storm of popular discontent. Fox, finding himself involved in the odium of measures against which he had repeatedly protested, and foreseeing that he should be exposed, unsupported, to the assaults of the opposition and the clamours of the people, tendered his resignation early in October. The duke of Newcastle, deprived of the assistance of Murray, now elevated to the bench with the title of lord Mansfield, first attempted to carry on the government against both Fox and Pitt, but his fears prevailed over his vanity, and negotiations were at last entered into with the latter. Pitt's aversion to his grace, however, was as insurmountable as that of Fox, and he insisted upon the total exclusion of the duke as the basis of the arrangement. His grace, deserted on all sides, had no alternative but resignation. The king was thus thrown into the arms of men towards whom he entertained a strong personal repugnance, and an inter-ministerium, as it was humorously called†, followed, in which Fox was commissioned to try if Pitt would join him. Pitt rejected both the terms and the agent; and the duke of Devonshire was selected to form an administration. The object was to induce a union between the two great parliamentary rivals, but as this was impossible, the duke recommended his majesty to comply with Pitt's demands, unreasonable as they were, because he was more popular than Fox.‡ The inter-ministerium lasted seventeen days; the parliament was prorogued for a fortnight to admit of the formation of the cabinet, and at last an administration was constructed which presented an anomalous mixture of all parties. Pitt was appointed secretary of state in the room of

* Letters of Horace Walpole.
† Ibid.
‡ Waldegrave's Memoirs.

Fox; Legge resumed his old place as chancellor of the exchequer; the duke of Devonshire displaced the duke of Newcastle; and Mr. Nugent went to the treasury. Upon the whole, there remained three personal friends of the duke of Newcastle's, and three of Fox's, and the greater part of the rest were selected by Pitt.

A government composed of such antagonist elements, was not calculated for permanency. Several of the new ministers were so ill provided with interest in the boroughs, that it resembled an administration out of parliament.* Dr. Hay, one of the new lords of the admiralty, was beaten at Stockbridge by Fox; and Townshend accepted an appointment only on condition that a borough could be found for him.† His majesty's prejudice against Pitt, who, although popular out of doors, possessed but little influence in a parliament chosen during the Newcastle administration, and the approaching trial of admiral Byng, brought the difficulties of the cabinet to a crisis.

The universal outcry against Byng hastened his trial under circumstances in every respect hopeless and unfavourable. But he carried himself through the peril with a firmness and composure that inspired his friends with the utmost confidence in the result. After the trial was concluded the court-martial deliberated over their decision for a week. Under the twelfth article of war condemnation was inevitable, but the members of the court-martial were divided amongst themselves, and desirous of mitigating the rigors of an article which they felt did not properly apply to the case. Finding, however, that they were legally compelled to decide against the accused, they declared him subject to the penalty of death for negligence, but acquitted him of disaffection and cowardice (the other heads of the article), recommending him earnestly at the same time to the merciful consideration of the king; and accompanying their sentence with an urgent letter to the lords 1757.

* Orford's Letters. † Ibid.

of the admiralty, soliciting them to intercede for his pardon; adding that, finding themselves tied up from moderating the article of war, and not being able conscientiously to pronounce that he had done all he could, they had been forced to bring him in guilty, but begged that he might be spared, as the only charge that could be sustained against him, was error of judgment. This humane prayer was supported by a variety of testimonies in favour of Byng. Lord Robert Bertie, colonel Smith, and other officers who were present in the engagement, bore witness to his coolness and courage, and Voltaire transmitted him from Switzerland a letter of the duc de Richelieu, the French commander, testifying to his good behaviour on the occasion.* But the king was opposed to mercy, and the people, in the height of a paroxysm of fury, demanded vengeance. The late ministers, including lord Anson, conscious of the danger of a re-action against themselves, inflamed this sanguinary feeling by every means in their power.† The present ministers, on the other hand, were disposed to pardon, but had not enough of firmness to combat the prejudices of the king or face the country. The case was submitted to the judges who, confined to the letter of the law, pronounced unfavourably to the accused. Lord Temple, whose duty it was as first lord of the admiralty, to sign the warrant for execution, hesitated over the fatal instrument—swayed by strong and agitating doubts; but the influences around him bore down his judgment, and he subscribed his name to a sentence of

* Voltaire's letter was written in English, as follows:—"Aux Délices, près de Genève. Sir, though I am almost unknown to you, I think 'tis my duty to send you the copy of the letter which I have just received from the marshal duc de Richelieu; honour, humanity, and equity order me to convey it into your hands. The noble and unexpected testimony from one of the most candid as well as most generous of my countrymen, makes me presume your judges will do you the same justice." This letter and its enclosure got into the hands of persons unfriendly to admiral Byng, and it is suspected never reached him.—See *Sir John Barrow's Life of Lord Anson.*

† The vulgar prejudices of the people were appealed to in lampoons and caricatures, and a paper was affixed to the Exchange, on which was written "Shoot Byng, or take care of your king." This storm, says Orford, was conjured up by lord Anson's creatures and protectors.

which he disapproved. His example was followed by the rest of the board, with the honourable exception of admiral Forbes, who declared that he would sacrifice his life before he would give his sanction to such an act. Strong intercessions were made with the king. Pitt appealed to his mercy, but the request was abruptly rejected. The duke of Bedford made a similar application, but with no better result. Lord Temple reported to his majesty a prayer for mercy from seven members of the court-martial; but the royal determination could not be moved. In this extremity, several members of the court-martial intreated to be relieved from their oaths of secresy, as they had something of the utmost importance to communicate in favour of the prisoner, and a bill to that effect passed the commons, but was rejected by the lords in consequence of the vacillation of the individuals at whose instance it originated. Byng was consequently ordered for execution.

If the resolution with which he met his fate might be cited as a proof of heroism, it would leave little doubt that he deserved the pardon which had been sought even by those who pronounced his sentence. A few days before his death, one of his friends standing beside him said, "Which of us is taller?" He replied, "Why this ceremony? I know what it means; let the man come, and measure me for my coffin." He declared that, being acquitted of cowardice, he was content to die; and frequently said that he would not suffer a handkerchief to be put over his face, that it might be seen whether he betrayed any symptoms of fear. When the day arrived, he took a tranquil leave of his friends, went upon deck, and placed himself calmly in a chair. It being, however, represented to him that his uncovered face might produce reluctance amongst the executioners, he consented to a handkerchief, which he tied with his own hands, then, giving the signal, fell pierced with balls.

It is impossible to review this transaction dispassion-

ately, and not to agree in the conclusion of a contemporary writer, that Byng was "sacrificed by a set of ministers, who meant to divert on him the vengeance of a betrayed and enraged nation." * The specific offence he committed did not come within the article of war under which he was condemned, and it was only by a strained interpretation of a doubtful statute that his judges could find him guilty. He was censurable for an error of judgment—for lingering when he ought to have advanced—and for suffering the enemy to escape, rather than for evading an engagement. So strongly were the most distinguished officers in the navy impressed with the danger of the precedent, that they made strenuous efforts to obtain a revision of that obscure and severe article; but it was impossible to wring such a concession from the king, influenced by Newcastle and Anson. Byng was clearly the victim of a conspiracy; for, although the error of which he was guilty merited some punishment, not one man was found publicly to maintain that he merited the punishment of death. Even the nation that had manifested so much rage against him considered the sentence too severe. The best proof of the secret motives that lay at the bottom of this disgraceful proceeding may be traced to the fact that the conduct of the ministers who, by delaying the sailing orders of the squadron, and consigning an inadequate force to so important a service, were the real delinquents, entirely escaped censure in the overwhelming anxiety concentrated upon the prosecution of Byng. This was the whole object in view, and Byng was immolated that the incompetent Newcastle might be preserved. †

* Lord Orford.

† That the whole plan was deliberately laid, and conducted with a predetermination to convict the prisoner, may be inferred from, or, rather, is proved by several circumstances; amongst others, an observation made *before* the trial by admiral Boscawen, one of the lords of the admiralty, who had Byng under his charge. Boscawen was not on the court-martial, but notwithstanding the oath of secrecy by which its members were bound, and the sacred character of the judicial functions they were about to fulfil, it appears that they took very little trouble to conceal beforehand that their minds were made up. In fact they treated the matter as a party

But what was gained by this legal murder? Was the cabinet secured? Were the people propitiated? We have already seen that the Newcastle administration was broken up even while the prosecution was in progress, and that the country relented before the sentence was executed. The public dissatisfaction, instead of being appeased by Byng's death, became more turbulent than ever at the state of public affairs. The continued humiliation of the British arms in America, the prospect of a war in the defence of his majesty's German electorate, and the presence of the Hanoverian troops on the soil of England, now that an invasion was no longer seriously apprehended, inflamed the passions of the populace beyond control. The new administration, made up of fragments of all parties, speedily discovered that they possessed as little popular influence as their predecessors, with this additional disadvantage, that they wanted the confidence of the king. The legacy of the trial placed them in the most embarrassing relations with his majesty, and completely deprived them of the power of conducting the government with harmony and success. Thus, by this sanguinary act, the country was thrown into disorder, while one ministry was dismembered, and another rendered incapable of discharging its functions.

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question, without reference to truth or humanity. Dining at sir Edward Montague's, the conversation turned upon the probable issue of the trial, when Boscawen incautiously exclaimed, "Well, say what you will, we shall have a majority, and he will be condemned." Orford relates another story which indicates the efforts that were made to have the sentence carried into execution. Being with the princess Amelia, many years afterwards, the princess told him that, while Byng's affair was pending, the duchess of Newcastle sent lady Sophia Egerton to her, to beg that she would be *for* the execution; "they thought," added the princess, "that unless he was put to death, *lord Anson could not be at the head of the admiralty.*" Byng was so convinced of the real motives to which his vindictive sentence was to be ascribed, that in a paper which he delivered immediately before his death to the marshal of the admiralty, he described himself as "a victim destined to divert the indignation and resentment of an injured and deluded people."

CHAP. XV.

1757—1759.

PAPER CONTROVERSIES. — ELECTION FOR ROCHESTER. — THE KING'S AVERSION TO HIS MINISTERS. — DUKE OF CUMBERLAND APPOINTED TO THE COMMAND IN HANOVER. — DISMISSAL OF PITT AND HIS FRIENDS. — HOPELESS NEGOTIATIONS TO FORM AN ADMINISTRATION. — THE INTER-MINISTERIUM. — THE KING ABANDONS THE ATTEMPT. — PITT RECALLED. — CONDUCT OF THE PRINCE OF WALES. — FAILURE OF THE EXPEDITION TO ROCHEFORT. — SIR JOHN MORDAUNT TRIED BY COURT MARTIAL. — DISASTERS IN GERMANY. — CONVENTION OF CLOISTER-SEVEN. — DUPLICITY OF THE KING — SECRET HISTORY OF THAT TRANSACTION. — THE DUKE OF CUMBERLAND RESIGNS ALL HIS EMPLOYMENTS. — RIOTS ABOUT THE MILITIA BILL. — SUPPORT VOTED TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA. — PITT'S OBJECTIONS TO THE GERMAN WAR. — DEATHS OF THE QUEEN OF POLAND AND THE PRINCESS CAROLINE. — VIOLATION OF THE CONVENTION OF CLOISTER-SEVEN. — FRENCH DRIVEN OUT OF HANOVER. — TRIUMPHS OF ABERCROMBIE AND AMHERST IN AMERICA: — SUCCESSES IN AFRICA AND THE WEST INDIES. — UNFORTUNATE AFFAIR AT ST. CAS. — UPWARDS OF TWELVE MILLIONS VOTED FOR THE YEAR. — FRESH RUMOURS OF INVASION.

THE new administration was involved from the commencement in angry paper controversies. The partizans of Pitt and Fox emulated the virulence of the adherents of Walpole and Bolingbroke; and the "Test" and "Contest" supplied the place of "Mist's Journal" and the "Craftsman."* But personal motives were too apparent at both sides to attract much attention to the

* The "Test" and "Contest" were published every Saturday; the former, principally written by Arthur Murphy, was against Pitt, and the latter against Fox. There was also a paper called the "Monitor," by Dr. Shebbeare, who, says Orford, made a pious resolution to write himself into a place or the pillory. He did both; was put into the pillory at the close of one reign, and received a pension at the beginning of the next.

hebdomadal scurrility; and intrigues within the cabinet soon deprived the skirmishers without of any temporary interest they possessed.

The king, who had exhibited so relentless a spirit towards admiral Byng, was anxious to obtain a seat in parliament for admiral Smith, the president of the court-martial. The first place that offered was Rochester, vacant by Byng's execution. Ministers intended to propose Dr. Hay, recently thrown out of Stockbridge by Fox; but the king would not hear of it. He told lord Temple that "Rochester was a borough of the crown, not of the admiralty; nor did he like Hay, nor any of their admiralty; they had endeavoured to represent his justice as cruelty; he would have admiral Smith chosen there." Lord Temple said he would not obstruct his majesty's commands, but declared he would have nothing to do with it, declining to pay the price of blood by bringing into parliament the president of that court which had condemned admiral Byng. When the proposal was made to Smith, he shrank from the revolting idea of succeeding a person he had sentenced to death, and excused himself on the plea that he had not sufficient estate for a qualification. Admiral Townshend, who had been placed over Byng in his imprisonment, was less scrupulous, and was returned. The object of pressing this election was to irritate Pitt and his friends. It was expected at court that he would immediately resign. But they were too prudent to be so easily duped.

Pitt and Legge were the only members of the government who were really popular. Against them and Temple, who, at the head of the admiralty, had frequently thwarted his majesty's wishes, the resentment of the king was specially directed. His majesty complained that lord Temple was pert and familiar, and that in Byng's affair he had used insolent expressions that could never be forgiven*; as to Pitt, he had intro-

* On one occasion, pleading for Byng, he went so far as to institute a parallel between the admiral and the monarch, which was not very favourable to the latter, wincing under the recollection of Oudenarde.

duced eloquence into the closet, made long speeches that might be very fine, but were quite beyond his majesty's comprehension; and he was affected, formal, and pedantic in his correspondence.* Secret overtures were made to the duke of Newcastle to induce him to form a new administration, but his grace, eager and impatient to come into power, was fearful of the responsibility, anxious, yet afraid, to take it into his own hands, and jealous of sharing it with others, whose assistance he knew was indispensable.† While this uncertainty was hanging over the administration, a circumstance occurred which suddenly decided its fate.

The French troops had invaded Germany, and threatened Hanover. No reliance was to be placed upon Hanoverian ministers or generals, who were Austrians at heart, and were clogged with estates in the dominions of the empress. The king, therefore, resolved that the duke of Cumberland should take the command. His grace, taking his lesson from Fox, stipulated for the dismissal of Pitt. He could not endure to receive orders from Pitt, to communicate with him, or depend on him for supplies. If he succeeded, Pitt would divide the glory—if he failed, he would bear all the shame himself. Time pressed, and the terms, so congenial to his majesty's own desires, were hastily granted. Temple was dismissed first, then Pitt and Legge, and the cabinet was turned out before it was settled who was to succeed.

The confusion produced in the government by this summary proceeding alarmed both its friends and enemies. The stocks fell; and the people clamoured for Pitt and his colleagues. The common council of London voted the freedom of the city, in a gold box, to Pitt and Legge; the example was followed by the principal towns in the kingdom, and gold boxes poured in from all quarters. Charles Townshend revenged himself by

* Waldegrave, Memoirs. Lord Orford, Memoirs.
† Waldegrave.

a caricature, a species of satire for which he was celebrated; and the public indignation was vented in pasquinades and pamphlets. A paper was affixed to St. James's Palace, with the words, "A secretary of state much wanted; honesty not necessary; no principles will be treated with." This was supposed to be directed against Pitt, but it might have been claimed as applying with equal propriety to his opponent.

For two months, the hopeless negotiations were carried on, and the country was literally without a government. The Newcastle party coquetted with office until the inquiries concerning Minorca, which were at this time before the house, should be brought to a conclusion. The king complained bitterly that the duke of Newcastle left him to the mercy of Pitt by not uniting with Fox. On the other hand, the princess dowager of Wales regarded any settlement in which Fox was concerned with aversion. The struggle was now evidently between the court and Leicester house, the truckling, capricious, insincere, and irresolute Newcastle forming the intermediate agent upon which both relied. Even Pitt, conscious of the duke's influence, relaxed his austerity to a man he intensely despised; and Fox expressed his willingness to coalesce with the duke, on condition that he should have a peerage for his wife, which was peremptorily refused, and the reversion of the place of clerk of the pells in Ireland, for himself and his sons, which he got in the scramble*, at a moment when it was generally supposed that he would succeed in forming an administration.† But he was undermined by New-

* This circumstance, and the corporation tributes to Pitt, gave occasion to numerous epigrams, of which the following is a specimen referring to both:—

"The two great rivals London might content,
If what he values most to each she sent;
Ill was the franchise coupled with the box;
Give Pitt the freedom, and the gold to Fox."

† "About three weeks ago," says lord Chesterfield, "Fox was in a manner declared minister, to the exclusion of the duke of Newcastle and Pitt, and the seals of the chancellorship of the exchequer were to have

castle, who had no definite plan to substitute, until, urged by lord Chesterfield, he drew up a scheme to include Pitt, which was indignantly rejected by the king.*

All this time the business of the country, engaged in a formidable war, was carried on by shifts and expedients. The only ostensible minister, who held office, was the duke of Devonshire, a man of limited capacity, "delighted with the plaything of power;" the seals of the exchequer were committed, *pro tempore*, to the chief justice; and, there being no responsible minister in the house of commons, the motion for the ways and means devolved on one of the lords of the treasury. The proceedings in parliament were curiously marked by the caution of all parties who hoped for places under government. Pitt displayed more art than all the rest in dropping sentences hostile to those who might become ministers, but readily convertible into excuses for himself, should he again be called to the councils of the sovereign.† In this way, navigating through currents and quicksands, a vote of a million was carried for the service of the war.

The king was at last reduced to the utmost extremity. Plan after plan had been tried and failed. Meetings were constantly held at Leicester house, at Claremont, at Kensington; but although the ministry always seemed on the point of formation, some new crotchet invariably interposed and rendered it impracticable. His majesty saw his authority dissolving in these feuds, and relinquished his demands. Lord Waldegrave and Fox were commissioned to form an administration, but after many fruitless efforts, they informed the king that it was impossible. His majesty then abandoned all further at-

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been given to him the next day. Upon this, Holdernesse resigned; the duke of Rutland and some others declared their intentions of following his example, and many refused the places that were offered them by Fox as the first minister for those two or three days. Upon these discouragements, Fox went to the king, and told him that it was impossible for him, in such a situation, to undertake the management of affairs.—*Chesterfield's Miscellaneous Works.*

* Waldegrave. Orford. † Orford.

tempts, observing that he found he was to be prisoner for the rest of his life; that he had not thought he had so many of Newcastle's footmen about him; and that soon he supposed he would not be able to make a page of the back stairs; as for Hanover, he must give it up; it cost 120,000*l.* a month for forage alone, and he found he must lose his electoral dominions for an English quarrel, while at the same time he lost all authority in England.*

The triumph of Leicester house was now accomplished, and the king was forced to accept a government, formed in opposition to the court under the auspices of his grandson. The inter-ministerium had occupied an interval of upwards of eleven weeks. All the negotiators were fatigued, and equally desirous of a settlement for which the country had become impatient. The composition of the ministry embraced all the contending parties, giving, however, the complete ascendancy to Pitt, who was appointed secretary of state, with Holdernesse for his colleague. The duke of Newcastle returned to the treasury, Legge to the exchequer, and lord Temple was made privy seal. Under this arrangement Fox condescended to accept the pay office, professing to be satisfied; and Pitt committed the error of placing lord Anson at the head of the admiralty. The new ministers kissed hands on the 29th of June.

The part which the prince of Wales took in these transactions, if not ostentatiously public, was positive and firm. If he did not appear openly to countenance the cabal against the royal authority, he sanctioned it in private, and assisted personally in the meetings at Leicester house, where the plan of operations was formed, and the design was ultimately completed. But it is remarkable that his conduct did not produce any outward alienation between him and the king; nor did it even excite so much notice at the time as to provoke a single commentary.† The king, however, felt his

* Orford.

† So little, indeed, does the prince's conduct seem to have been known,

humiliation deeply; and, says a contemporary writer, although passively obedient to the new ministers, he wanted sufficient dissimulation to submit with a good grace. He behaved to Pitt as to a prince who had conquered him, and to the duke of Newcastle, as to a faithless servant who had delivered him into the hands of an enemy.

Pitt resolved to open his administration with a daring movement; and, learning that the town of Rochefort, which lay ten miles from the French coast, was undefended at one side, he ordered a formidable armament to be equipped, for the purpose of besieging it. Lord Anson declared that it was impossible to make the necessary preparations within the time appointed for the rendezvous. Pitt, who trampled upon impossibilities, replied, that "it must be done; and that if the ships were not ready at the time specified, he should signify the neglect to the king, and impeach his lordship in the house of commons." The difficulties vanished before the menace; and a powerful fleet set sail, under the command of sir Edward Hawke, and generals Mordaunt and Conway. The instructions were, to attempt Rochefort, or any other place on the coast to which they found an opening. On the 23d of September the fleet anchored off the isle of Oleron. After some time had been expended in reconnoitring, a descent was made on the little isle of Aix, which, exposed to a brisk fire, surrendered in less than two hours. A council of war was immediately held; the deliberations were fruitlessly prolonged; the difficulties of the proposed attack upon Rochefort were canvassed; a variety of plans were sug-

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that until the appearance of the "Memoirs," by Orford and Waldegrave, and the publication of the "Correspondence" of the former, the facts above referred to were not only never stated in print, but they were so far from being even suspected, that statements to the contrary effect were universally received. The "Annual Register" for 1760, misled by the absence of all doubts of the prince's devotion to his grandfather, observes that George II., towards the end of his life, "had the satisfaction to see in his successor, what is very rare, the most affectionate obedience, the most dutiful acquiescence in his will!"

gested; the generals could not agree; and, at length, the fleet returned, arriving at Portsmouth on the 3d of October. The indignation excited by this failure was chiefly directed against sir John Mordaunt, who had throughout opposed the bold but rash opinions of his colleague Conway. He was tried by court-martial, and acquitted. Byng, it was pertinently remarked, was executed for not having done enough, and Mordaunt was acquitted for doing nothing.

While this affair was occupying some attention at home, the duke of Cumberland was suffering fresh mortifications in the scene of his former misfortunes. He had embarked early in the spring for Hanover, and taken the command of the confederate troops, amounting to 50,000 men. The advance of the French in formidable numbers, from the banks of the Rhine, compelled him speedily to retire beyond the Weser, leaving Hanover to their mercy. The enemy impetuously pursued him, passed the river without opposition, and attacked him in his camp at Hastenbeck, on the 25th of July. For some time, the duke disputed the ground with vigour and courage; and, although inferior in numbers, reduced the issue to an equality of chances. Having thus far succeeded, either his fortitude or his judgment forsook him, and he gave orders for a retreat.* The prince of Brunswick displayed his heroism on this occasion in a *coup d'essai*, which drew from the king

* An apologist of the duke of Cumberland, lord Orford, gives rather a different version of this action. He says that the French had great difficulty in bringing up their men, and despaired of the victory: but fresh squadrons poured in, and as more were approaching, the duke, "apprehensive of being enclosed, resigned the success, though not the glory, of the day to D'Etrées (the French commander) who was happy to find his enemy take a step, that he was deliberating whether it would not be prudent for him to take himself."—*Memoirs*, vol. ii. It may be remarked, almost as a truism, that there is scarcely ever a battle lost that was not very nearly won by the beaten general. The only wonder on all such occasions is that, being on the point of winning, they should throw up the game. This defence of the duke of Cumberland will hardly bear examination. If the duke was placed in such peril that he was apprehensive of being enclosed, why did marshal D'Etrées deliberate upon the prudence of running away? He must surely have known, as well as the duke, all the advantages that were on his side, obtained by his own orders. Was he afraid of getting a victory? The duke's apologist has fallen into the mistake of proving too much.

of Prussia the observation that "nature had destined him for a hero."* A redoubt had been carried in the centre of the allied army, when the prince of Brunswick, sword in hand, at the head of a battalion of Wolfenbuttle, and another of Hanoverian guards, threw himself upon the enemy, and instantly recovered it. This achievement inspired the troops in that part of the field with renewed enthusiasm; but the army was in motion, and the fate of the day was decided.

From Hastenbeck the duke retreated to Nienburg, closely followed by the enemy; and from thence was forced to fall back upon Verden and finally halted at Stade, where he was reduced to the dilemma of cutting his way through the enemy or capitulating. His further march in that direction was arrested by the German Ocean; on the right and left he was hemmed in by the Elbe and the Weser; and all the passes through which he had receded, were rapidly occupied by his pursuers. What course the duke's inclination would have led him to embrace in this critical situation, it would be idle to speculate upon; it is certain that, after a long pause, during which both armies were within reach of each other, and the French marshal might have seized many favourable opportunities for attack had he not been well aware that he could make his own terms without fighting, a convention was signed between the two generals at Cloister-Seven, on the 7th of September, which left Hanover in the hands of the French until a peace should be ratified with England. The whole confederate army, except the troops of the king of Prussia, which had previously withdrawn, were dispersed and compelled to return to their several countries.

Upon the face of this transaction, the powers assumed by the duke of Cumberland would seem to be as unwarrantable as they were extraordinary and unprecedented; for it would be monstrous to suppose that a military commander would be justified in exercising his own discretion to the extent of delivering up the king's

* Hist. de la Guerre de Sept Ans.

dominions to the hands of foreigners, without being fortified by instructions from a responsible quarter. In this case, no such instructions had been sent from the English government, and when the intelligence of this convention reached London, ministers were so astonished at what had happened that they submitted to his majesty the necessity of writing to the courts of Europe to disavow all participation in the affair. But the duke had instructions, nevertheless, clear, peremptory, and full, although he never had the benefit during his life-time of the exposure of that secret history which, indispensable to the vindication of his own honour, would have drawn down public odium and irretrievable disgrace upon the king.*

The courage of the duke of Cumberland, whose ambition of military glory led him into so many misfortunes in the field before he had acquired the requisite experience for command, was unquestionable. It was generally believed, when the news of his disasters reached the council at Hanover, that his high spirit would never permit him to surrender, and that he would peril his life upon an engagement, the result of which, taking into calculation the overwhelming odds, could hardly be doubtful. The Hanoverian ministers, in close communication with the king of England, were so strongly impressed with the consequences that must have followed, that they determined to prevent him from taking so dangerous a step. It was expected not only that the whole army, in such an event, would be cut to pieces, but that the victors, in complete and undisturbed possession of the entire country, would at once restore Bremen and Verdun — the causes of so much English perfidy and profligate expenditure — to

* The secret history of this unfortunate capitulation was revealed for the first time by lord Orford in his "Memoirs." Until the publication of that work in 1822, the real facts were so carefully concealed that in all the historical works we possess referring to that period, the whole blame of the cowardly and inglorious proceeding is thrown upon the duke of Cumberland. Smollet and Belsham were evidently ignorant of the circumstances stated by lord Orford, who in this, as in many other instances, throws important light upon the transactions of his time.

Sweden. This was a sacrifice which his majesty could not endure to contemplate. Even the humiliation of his son and the dishonour of his arms, appeared a lesser evil than the loss of these favourite duchies. It was consequently determined upon to put Hanover into sequestration during the war, in preference to risking its conquest and dismemberment. Strict orders were sent to the duke from his sovereign and the German council to this effect; and, to make sure of the accomplishment of the plan, his majesty prevailed on his son-in-law, the king of Denmark, to mediate between the duke and the French commander. The count Lynar was appointed to undertake the negotiation. He arrived in the camp on the 7th of September, and so prompt, urgent, and decisive were his measures that the capitulation which he brought in his pocket, was signed the next morning.

The sequel is incredible. The amazement expressed by the members of the government on the receipt of this news, was not greater than that which was feigned by the king. When ministers observed that it was necessary to disavow the transaction, he agreed with them. He even asserted, that so strongly was he opposed to such a capitulation that he would produce a rough draft of a letter he had prepared to send to his son (but which he never sent) positively commanding him to fight. The clamour that was thus provoked against the duke of Cumberland ran to the highest pitch of indignation. The partizans of Leicester house reflected severely upon him, and Legge, the chancellor of the exchequer, joined in the general outcry. How, he exclaimed, could he again propose the Hessian troops, whose hands were tied up from assisting us? or must he waive the subsidy to them, when they were starving in our cause? The general resentment was carried so far, that an inquiry into the duke's conduct was seriously proposed. Pitt, alone, ignorant as he was of the treachery to which the duke was sacrificed, acted with generosity and firmness. He deprecated such extremities, and maintained that the

duke's authority was sufficient to justify what he had done. When the king reminded him that he had given his son no orders for the convention, Pitt replied, "But full powers, sir, very full powers." He appears to have detected the presence of hypocrisy, the exact nature of which it was impossible to penetrate.

Upon the duke's return, discovering the perfidy that had been practised against him, he resolved to relieve himself from all suspicion of acquiescence in the duplicity, by resigning his employments, including his regiment and the post of captain-general. He had orders in his possession for every thing he did, and encomiums from the Hessian generals and the duke of Wolfenbuttle. This unexpected intimation filled the king with real concern, and he sent privately to request his son not to resign; and again, finding him inflexible, to ask as a favour that he would at least retain his regiment. But the duke was not to be moved from his purpose. He had determined never to be employed under his father again, and told Fox that no collusion about the treaty should be imputed to him, by the resumption of his command. He then formally resigned all his appointments.

The only commentary that need be made on this extraordinary passage in the life of George II. is, that he afterwards broke this very convention when it suited his purpose. But that circumstance cannot excite much surprise. He who was capable of disavowing his own act, and sacrificing the credit of his son, could not be supposed to feel much difficulty in violating any engagement into which he had entered.

Turning from the court to the people, bewildered by these unintelligible cabals, there was at this moment but little prospect of that glory which the administration of Pitt was ultimately destined to achieve. The militia bill, clogged with absurdities by lord Hardwicke, produced universal discontent amongst the lower classes. The provision which particularly incensed the populace was that which obliged every man, called for the militia, to pay ten pounds, or find a substitute; and as he was

liable to be drawn again in three years, this penalty was regarded as a tax of upwards of three pounds per annum. The tories took advantage of this unpopular measure, and endeavoured to persuade the people that whoever should give in his name would be trepanned for life. Riots ensued in various parts of England. The lists were forced by violence from the magistrates; the duke of Bedford's house was threatened; lord Robert Sutton escaped narrowly with his life; the duke of Dorset was attacked at Knowle; and the speaker, assailed and menaced at his own residence, was forced to capitulate with the mob, by promising that no further steps should be taken in the matter until the following session of parliament—when the bill, with all its severities and incongruities, was carried through both houses.

Parliament opened in December. The royal speech congratulated the country on the recent successes of the king of Prussia, and asked for assistance to support an ally who had exhibited so much zeal and magnanimity in the "common cause,"—the support of the protestant religion and the liberties of Europe. The enthusiasm which prevailed in favour of the king of Prussia at this juncture, easily reconciled the people to regard him as a new apostle of protestantism, although his profession of the reformed faith was notoriously known to be nothing better than a politic mask for infidelity. Under the magnificent and convenient phrase of "the liberties of Europe," all that was really meant was the recovery of Hanover. The king of Prussia was fighting for his own dominions, for his own safety, and for any ulterior chances of aggrandisement that might accrue from the war. If there was any religion in the case, he was fighting *against* protestantism, and not *for* it—against Saxony, the first protestant power in Germany, and against Sweden, always distinguished in the defence of the protestant faith. The anxiety of the English monarch on the subject formed a striking contrast with the indifference of Holland and Denmark, who, as much opposed to popery as his Britannic majesty, exhibited

no alarm whatever for the safety of protestantism. Having been put under the ban of the empire, in his quality of Elector of Brandenburg, by the diet of Ratisbon, for ravaging Saxony, like a marauder, for seizing upon Dresden, and breaking open the royal cabinet, the king of Prussia assembled his army, penetrated Bohemia, overthrew the Austrians on the banks of the Moldau, and, after suffering a slight reverse at Kolin, resumed the conflict with redoubled ardour, gaining a decisive victory over the French and Imperial troops at Rosbach. The Austrians subsequently took Schweidnitz, and pursued their triumph to the gates of Berlin; but the king rallied again, and, making another desperate effort, vanquished the flower of the combined forces at Lissa. He seems to have been thoroughly conscious of the unequal contest to which his prodigal valour and restless spirit had committed him; and in a private letter at this period makes the significant remark that "the great Elector would be surprised to see his grandson at war with the Russians, the Swedes, the Austrians, almost all Germany, and a hundred thousand French auxiliaries. I know not," he adds, "whether it will be disgrace in me to submit; but I am sure there will be no glory in vanquishing me."

It was to support this war, in the name of the protestant religion and the liberties of Europe, that a fresh demand was made upon the industry of England. Pitt was aware of its folly and injustice, but could not avert it. He subsequently declared that "it was impossible, after the treaties made with the king of Prussia, to leave that monarch to the mercy of his enemies; and that he entered office with the German war tied like a mill-stone round his neck." Yet on this occasion supplies were voted to the amount of 10,000,000*l.* almost without the decent formality of a debate; the only person who ventured to oppose the motion being sir Francis Dashwood. Several years afterwards Pitt complained that parliament always acquiesced in this war, and afforded him no excuse for withdrawing from it, declaring openly in the

house of commons that every session during his administration he had demanded, "Has any body any objection to the German war? Nobody would object to it, one gentleman only excepted (sir Francis Dashwood), since removed to the upper house; he told me he did not like a German war; I honoured the man for it, and was sorry when he was turned out of his post."

The court carried all their measures through the session, which terminated in the ensuing June. The only subject that produced a prolonged debate, was a motion for shortening the duration of parliament. This topic was always distasteful to the administration, whatever were the principles its members might have professed out of office; and it was invariably set aside by some temporary artifice. The excuse in this instance was, that it was highly inexpedient to think of any alteration in the form of government at home, while the country was engaged abroad in a dangerous war; as if any moment was inopportune for the settlement of the legislature on a popular and secure basis.

Before the close of the year, the unfortunate queen of Poland died suddenly at Dresden. She had piously endeavoured to temper the calamities she could not prevent, and her last hours were filled with unavailing anguish. The princess Caroline, third daughter of the king of England, died about the same time. Her imagination had long been haunted by the prediction of her dying mother, that she should die within a twelvemonth after her decease. The princess outlived the superstitious prophecy for several years; but, retreating from the world, buried herself in two dark chambers in the inner part of St. James's palace, from whence no external objects were visible. In this seclusion, as profound as the cloisters, she led a blameless life, chequered by the occasional visits of her family, and by acts of generosity and benevolence, which were revealed only when the source from whence they came was extinct.

The successes of the king of Prussia, and the consequent reduction of the French army, encouraged the

king to look with hope to the rescue of Hanover. But how was this desirable object to be gained? By the convention of Cloister-Seven, Hanover was to remain neutral in the hands of the French until the termination of the war; and agreeably to that arrangement, the troops had been disbanded in September. But nothing was more easy than to re-organize the troops, and break the convention. The excesses committed in the electorate by the French soldiers afforded a convenient pretext for this monstrous act of perfidy; and, accordingly, in the following November, the scattered army was called back from its cantonments, and assembled once more at Stade, under the command of prince Ferdinand of Brunswick. Thus, in the space of two months, a disgraceful treaty was entered into with the connivance of the king, disavowed in the same breath, then acknowledged and acted on, and next violated. Pitt was not insensible to the shame of this proceeding; but he was compelled to yield to the German politics of the king, or risk the necessity of abandoning office at a moment when his counsels were more than ever required to carry on the government. He had, also, this excuse, that the people, humiliated by the ignominious convention, were rejoiced at any opportunity that offered for relieving themselves from its degradation. The wisest and most inflexible minister is sometimes constrained, between a choice of difficulties, to bow to a popular error, and embrace an alternative of which he disapproves.

The campaign was opened by prince Ferdinand with 1758.
the most brilliant success. Attacking the enemy in four different quarters at once, he obtained a complete triumph, and ultimately drove them out of Hanover. Two divisions of the French army were beaten in detail by generals Schuylenburg and Zastrow; the town and castle of Harburg were reduced; and the cities of Lunenburg and Zell were recovered. When these successes were achieved, the two armies went into winter quarters. In retiring from the city of Hanover, the French gover-

nor displayed an honourable trait of lenity and moderation. Marching out last himself, to prevent his troops from committing any acts of revenge or rapine, he nobly abandoned his magazines to the magistrates, instead of destroying them in conformity with the barbarous usages of war.

The king of Prussia was now effectually relieved and supported; and a subsidy treaty was concluded between him and the king of Great Britain, by which the latter engaged to pay his Prussian majesty an annual sum of 670,000*l.*, to be devoted at his discretion to the "common cause." The rapacity of that monarch is as unquestionable as his heroism. Not content with this munificent allowance, and the booty he had already acquired, as soon as the battle of Lissa freed him from the presence of the Austrians, who retired into Bohemia, he directed his fiery course into Saxony, Pomerania, and Mecklenburg, where he levied enormous contributions on the persecuted inhabitants.

While these transactions were going forward on the continent of Europe, vigorous efforts were making to redeem the misfortunes of the previous campaigns in America. General Abercrombie held the chief command. Lord Amherst had a separate command, with brigadier-general Wolfe for second. Several officers, selected by Pitt, were appointed for this important service*, and admiral Boscawen was sent out with powerful reinforcements. The whole strength of the army amounted to about 50,000 men, and skilful plans were laid down for the approaching operations. The first movement was upon Louisburg, which was invested by general Amherst in June. The garrison was so reduced that resistance appeared hopeless, and the governor capitulated on the

* The king said a smart thing on this occasion, which, as such humours were rare with him, deserves to be recorded. Conway was impatient to be employed any where on any service, and solicited occupation in America. But the king had taken a prejudice against him on account of the Rochefort affair, although it was proved that Conway had recommended bold measures on that occasion. This fact was urged upon the king; it was represented that Conway's case was different from Mordaunt's,—that he had at least tried to do something. "Yes," said the king, "*après dîné la moutarde.*"

27th of July. The city of Louisburg and the whole island of Cape Breton were now in possession of the English; and six ships of the line and five frigates, stationed in the harbour, were either taken or destroyed.

General Abercrombie, at the head of a powerful force, undertook to reduce the French forts on Lakes George and Champlain. As the troops advanced upon Fort Ticonderago a skirmish took place, in which lord Howe, a young nobleman of great promise, was slain.* Fort Ticonderago presented peculiar difficulties to the besiegers. It stood between the two lakes, was surrounded on three sides by water, and defended on the fourth by a morass, with breastwork and entrenchments. General Abercrombie made a resolute assault, was severely repulsed, and compelled to abandon the place with a loss of nearly 2000 men. The project of reducing the lake forts was relinquished.

This disaster, however, was rapidly repaired. Fort Frontenac on the St. Lawrence, and Fort Du Quesne on the Ohio, were invested, and subdued with little loss; the name of the latter place being changed to Pittsburg, in honour of the minister. The increasing influence of the British was displayed in a treaty of peace which they now effected with the Indian nations inhabiting the extensive plains between the lakes and the Ohio.†

* The assembly of Massachusetts paid a well-merited tribute to this gallant youth, by passing a vote for the erection of a cenotaph to his memory amongst the heroes of Great Britain in the collegiate church of Westminster.

† At the conference which took place between the British generals and the Indian chiefs when this treaty was entered into, the latter frankly reproached the English with the injustice they had always exhibited towards them, in driving them from their hunting grounds without compensation, treating them harshly, and taking no trouble to conciliate them or listen to their complaints. The Indians preferred to deal with the French, who acted more wisely and humanely; and hence all the difficulties that originally arose, in preserving the frontier settlements that lay on the margin of the Indian country. "Brethren," said one of these chiefs to the British commissioners, "I have raised my voice, and all the Indians, have heard me as far as the Twightivees, and have regarded my voice, and are now come to this place. Brethren, the cause why the Indians of Ohio left you was owing to yourselves. The governor of Virginia settled in our lands, and disregarded our messages; but when the French came to us, they traded with our people, used them kindly, and gained their affections. Our cousins, the Minisinks, tell us they were wronged of a great deal of land, and pushed back by the English settling so fast upon them as not to

These successes were contemporaneous with other triumphs in other parts of the world. Early in the year a project was laid before the minister for the reduction of Fort Louis on the river Senegal, in Africa. A small squadron was equipped for this undertaking; and, after dispersing a few armed vessels at the mouth of the river, took possession of the fort without opposition. The island of Goree, to the south of Senegal, was reduced shortly afterwards by admiral Keppel; and about the same time Guadaloupe, Deseada, and Marigalante in the West Indies, surrendered after an obstinate resistance to generals Hopson and Barrington.

Such a swift succession of victories inspired the minister with confidence, and filled the nation with enthusiasm. England had once more vindicated her reputation, and, breaking the bondage of petty interests that had for so long a period pressed upon her energies and subdued her spirit, was again plumed with conquests, and proudly re-asserting her ascendency amongst the kingdoms of Europe. The feuds of party were forgotten in the national exultation; and the popularity of Pitt was no longer the sentiment of a faction, but the passion of a whole people. There was manifestly no choice between the inflexible pacific policy of Walpole and the energetic and extensive projects of Pitt. The

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know whether they have any lands remaining in surety. You deal hardly with us; you claim all the wild animals of the forests, and will not let us come on your lands so much as to hunt after them; you will not let us peel the bark of a single tree to cover our cabins, — surely this is hard! Our fathers, when they sold the land, did not purpose to deprive themselves of hunting the wild deer, or using a branch of wood. Brethren, we have already acquainted you with our grievances, and we have referred our cause to the great king. I desire to know if king George has yet decided this matter, and whether justice will be done the Minisinks?" Of course, justice was promised them on the spot in a flourish of oriental imagery, and the chief received a belt and a string of wampum in token of the pacific intentions of his Britannic majesty. Wherever European colonization has spread the aborigines have suffered in like manner, and in like manner have been cheated by fair words and trinkets. The consequence is that these aboriginal nations are vanishing from the earth; some of them are already extinct; and, setting aside the inhumanity of this system of extermination (too often taking a revolting shape of wholesale slaughter), the means will ultimately be lost of resolving, by a physiological comparison of these races, the curious and important problem of the common origin of man.

temporising measures of Pelham, the timorous and indecisive theories of Newcastle, and the vainglorious bluster of Carteret, had cast the country into a lethargy, from which it was disturbed by Pitt with the clarions of battle and the shouts of triumph. War alone could have rescued England from the degradation that impended over her; and the extension of the war beyond the narrow limits of Hanoverian influences into remote scenes, where new channels of enterprise and commerce were opened to her population, repaid in tenfold advantages the risk and cost incurred in its prosecution.

But the progress of the British arms was not wholly free from incidental checks. The failure at Rochefort did not discourage the minister from resuming a similar attempt; and commodore Howe, an officer of approved judgment and experience, was despatched upon a second expedition of the same nature. Landing his troops in Normandy, agreeably to his instructions, he took possession of the town of Cherbourg; and after destroying the harbour and basin, put out to sea, still hovering, however, about the French coast. Arriving at St. Maloes, the land forces, under general Bligh, disembarked two miles to the westward of that town, which was too strongly fortified to be attempted by a *coup de main*. The weather proving tempestuous, the commodore left them there, with instructions to rejoin him at St. Cas. The whole affair, from beginning to end, betrayed the want of a tangible object, and of ordinary prudence or sagacity. Why the troops ventured into the enemy's country, why they were left there, or why, separated from the ships, they committed the still greater folly of wandering into the interior, as if they were exploring a newly-discovered continent, have never been explained. The issue was as disastrous as the entire proceeding was ill-judged and extravagant. Having idly advanced to a considerable distance beyond the possibility of protection from the fleet, intelligence reached them of the approach of the duc d'Aiguillon with a formidable force, to intercept their return. A precipitate retreat was ordered;

but before the English general could effect his object, the grenadier guards, who were to cover the embarkation, to the number of 1500 men, were attacked in a hollow way, and nearly the whole of them either killed or made prisoners. It was necessary for the troops to descend the rocks in order to gain the ships. The French, appearing on the heights above, destroyed them at their leisure. The intrepidity displayed by the unfortunate soldiers was of no avail under such circumstances. General Dury, shot as he was descending, fell into the sea; sir John Armitage, a volunteer of fortune, met a similar fate; and several officers of distinction fell into the hands of the enemy. The folly of this exploit furnished an inexhaustible theme of ridicule abroad, and damped for a moment the ardour of the people at home. It was emphatically called, in reference to the vast sacrifice on the one side, and the trivial loss on the other, "a scheme to break windows with guineas." But St. Cas was forgotten in the victories that were speedily achieved in other quarters.

The proceedings of parliament had now become comparatively matters of inferior interest; and when the house opened in November, both houses were employed in exhausting the language of panegyric upon the heroes who were fighting the battles of the country abroad. Even the startling supplies demanded by the minister had no effect in abating their zeal. Pitt had artfully prepared the way for their compliance by discarding Hanover in the previous session. The speech from the throne on that occasion spoke openly of the defence of his majesty's dominions in England and *elsewhere*. Pitt repudiated the word *elsewhere* in the course of the debate. He said that he meant the army for the use of England alone, and that he would not send a drop of English blood to the Elbe, to be lost in that ocean of gore. This declaration re-assured the fears of those who doubted, and were afraid or unwilling to speak; and the supplies, increasing with gigantic strides year after year, were voted without a murmur. The minister took a lofty tone, and

called upon those who disapproved of the measures in progress to speak out and discuss them, and not to vent their spleen in pamphlets, or lie in wait for distresses to find fault. The generals received unanimous votes of thanks; the army was extended to nearly 95,000 British troops and 7000 foreigners; and upwards of twelve millions of money were granted for the service of the year.

Towards the close of the session, in May, the king informed both houses, through the two secretaries of state, that he had received authentic information of an intended invasion by the French. Fresh protestations of attachment followed. Extensive preparations were put into train, and the powers of the militia bill were peremptorily tested. The next news turned the militia bayonets into ploughshares. 1759.

CHAP. XVI.

1759—1760.

BRILLIANT SUCCESSION OF NAVAL VICTORIES. — ENGAGEMENT OFF GIBRALTAR. — DEFEAT OF THE FRENCH SQUADRON IN THE BAY OF QUIBERON. — THUROT'S ENTERPRISE. — CAMPAIGN IN AMERICA. — SIEGE AND CONQUEST OF QUEBEC. — DEATH OF WOLFE. — CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY. — BATTLE OF MINDEN. — CONDUCT OF LORD GEORGE SACKVILLE. — MUNIFICENT SUPPLIES VOTED BY PARLIAMENT. — PARLIAMENTARY QUALIFICATION ACT. — CLAMOUR IN IRELAND AGAINST THE UNION. — DEATHS IN THE ROYAL FAMILIES OF EUROPE. — CAMPAIGN IN GERMANY. — FINAL ACQUISITION OF CANADA. — COURT MARTIAL ON LORD GEORGE SACKVILLE. — DEATH OF GEORGE II. — HIS CHARACTER.

THE ships of England at this period commanded nearly all the practicable waters of the world, and were everywhere triumphant. The number and importance of the collisions with the enemy were unparalleled within a similar compass of time. A fierce and unremitting warfare was kept up in the West Indies, where several armed ships and prizes richly laden with French goods were captured, and carried into the neighbouring harbours. Those seas were covered with privateers, who inflicted, at intervals, severe reprisals upon the British, seizing during the year no less than 200 ships, valued at 600,000*l.*; a large amount, but sinking into insignificance in comparison with the seizures on the other side. A vast number of privateers and ships were taken in the channel and elsewhere, and conveyed into the English ports; and the engagements that took place in distant quarters exhibited a roll of victories more rapid and decisive than had ever before been achieved by the naval power of England. The names of Hood, Elliot, Gilchrist, Barrington, and Falkner, are conspi-

cuous in these gallant exploits which conferred such imperishable glory upon their country.

The intelligence received in England of the preparations on the coast of France for a meditated invasion of Great Britain, assuming by degrees a more distinct and unequivocal shape, admiral Rodney was ordered with a squadron to Havre-de-Grace, for the purpose of destroying the flat-bottomed boats that were building in that harbour for the embarkation of the troops. Arrived at the narrow channel of the river leading to Harfleur, the admiral disposed his vessels for a bombardment of the town. The inhabitants fled in the utmost consternation; the town was set on fire in several places; and the devastation committed by shots and shells was very considerable. But the actual injury committed upon the military resources of the enemy was trifling compared with the cost of the armament. Pitt was prodigal of expenditure in such enterprises; contenting himself with planning magnificent projects, and leaving the treasury people to find the means. The only sound apology that could be made for this fruitless undertaking was, that it warded off the battle from the shores of England, ill prepared at the time to to encounter an attack. There were not more than 12,000 disposable troops in the whole kingdom, and the French prisoners who crowded the towns were consigned to the charge of the militia. Under such circumstances it was necessary, at any expenditure, to divert the scene of hostilities from home.

A more decisive action occurred later in the year off the straits of Gibraltar. Admiral Boscawen, who then held the command in the Mediterranean, finding the French fleet lying at anchor at Toulon, had the temerity to order three ships of the line to advance and burn two of the enemy's ships that lay close to the mouth of the harbour. Overpowered, however, by a superior force, and exposed to the fire of a line of batteries they had not before perceived, they sustained serious damage; and the admiral returned to Gibraltar for the purpose of refitting

his shattered vessels. In the meanwhile, M. de la Clue, the French commander, availed himself of the opportunity of sailing, hoping to pass the straits unobserved. But the English admiral had not omitted to take the necessary precautions; and being apprised of the approach of the enemy, he immediately put out to sea, and made the signal to chase. A furious running fight ensued, in which the French displayed great intrepidity against a superior force. At length M. de la Clue, finding the struggle hopeless, and the English squadron crowding all their sails to come up with him, determined to burn his ships rather than submit. Being at this time near the coast of Portugal, he ran his own vessel ashore near the fort of Almadana, from the batteries of which three shots were fired on the English. One of the French captains followed the example of the admiral; others attempted to land their men at another part of the coast; and two of the vessels altered their course, and deserted. This victory was effected at a very inconsiderable loss, while the carnage on the other side was terrific. The admiral's ship (esteemed to be the best in the French navy) and three other first-rate vessels struck their colours, a fifth was burned after having been abandoned by the crew, and two of the prizes were sent home to England. The gallant De la Clue was severely wounded in both legs, and expired soon after. This engagement took place on the 18th of August.

By the arrangements so promptly made to arrest the threatened invasion nearly all the French harbours, where naval armaments of any consequence had been in preparation, were kept in check; and it was hoped that the assault on Havre-de-Grace, and the failure of the squadron equipped at Toulon, would effectually prevent any further attempts to carry the menace into execution. But the French government had not yet abandoned the design; and a formidable fleet, which had been fitted up in the harbours of Rochefort, Brest, and Port Louis, was now ready for sea under the command of M. Conflans, with powerful reinforcements of troops assembled

in Lower Bretagne. But the coast was so completely blockaded by the British navy that no opportunity offered of getting out of the harbour of Brest, where the fleet was collected, until in the month of November the English squadron, commanded by sir Edward Hawke, were driven from their reconnoitring station by stress of weather, and forced to take anchor in Torbay. M. Conflans instantly put out to sea with twenty-one sail of the line and four frigates. Sir Edward Hawke, receiving intelligence of their departure, sailed without loss of time, and came up with them on their own coast, off the bay of Quiberon, on the 20th of November. The weather was tempestuous, and the days short and cloudy; and the English admiral laboured under the further disadvantage of a lee shore, and a coast full of rocks and quicksands. M. Conflans, availing himself of these circumstances, endeavoured to shelter his fleet amongst the rocks, but sir Edward Hawke followed him with broadsides. The action opened at three o'clock in the day, and a scene rendered awful by the state of the elements ensued. The gallantry of the English throughout the whole of this tremendous engagement was worthy of the signal victory they obtained. In the midst of a tempest, exposed to a dangerous shore, and maintaining a position which the most heroic courage could not improve, they poured such a destructive fire into the enemy, that the whole fleet must have been annihilated if darkness had not intervened and suspended the battle. Two English vessels were lost in the storm, but the crews were saved; and this was the principal damage the squadron sustained. On the other side, two ships of the line were stranded and destroyed; two more were sunk during the action; a fifth struck her colours, but the state of the weather precluded the possibility of taking possession of her; the flag-ship was burned by her own crew to prevent her from falling into the hands of the British; another was taken; eight got away during the night; and seven, with considerable difficulty, sheltered themselves in the river Vilaine, where they were blockaded,

but ultimately found means to escape to Rochefort. This conclusive defeat nearly extinguished the French navy, and, after this time, the invasion was heard of no more.

A petty armament of four or five frigates that had sailed out of Dunkirk under the command of Thurot, an adventurer who had distinguished himself by his intrepidity, was still hovering round the coasts of Scotland and the north of Ireland. Cruizing about amongst the northern isles, Thurot learned the fate of Conflans; but he had the genius and audacity of a pirate, and being sore pressed for want of provisions in the following February, he landed a small body of men on the Irish coast under the walls of the dilapidated town of Carrickfergus. The duke of Bedford, lord-lieutenant of Ireland, had been urged by the administration to take some measures for the protection of the country; but the alarm created by the sudden announcement of his instructions in the Irish parliament led to such consternation that the project was abandoned. The small force at Carrickfergus had scarcely any ammunition, and the place was in so ruinous a condition that it could not hold out against a siege. But Thurot only wanted provisions, which he promised to pay for; giving the scanty garrison the alternative of having the tottering walls razed to the ground. The provisions were agreed for; but some difference arising, the courageous little band closed the gates upon the hungry enemy. When their powder was expended, they had recourse to stones and bricks. This species of warfare, however honourable to the bravery of the beseiged, was useless; and the place at length surrendered, reduced by famine as much as by want of the means of defence. Thurot plundered the town, and sent to demand contributions from the opulent city of Belfast. The duke of Bedford thought it was now time to interfere, and ordered seven regiments of horse and foot to the rescue. But Thurot prudently took to his boats before they arrived, carrying with him the mayor and three of the principal inhabitants of Carrickfergus as hostages. Three frigates that lay at Kinsale, commanded by cap-

tain Elliot, immediately put out to sea, overtook the roving vessels in the Irish Channel, and captured them after a desperate resistance; Thurot falling, as became him, sword in hand.

In America the progress of the war was crowned with results still more important and decisive. The French, harassed at all points, and weakened by losses and divisions, felt the necessity of concentrating their forces, and drawing them in for the protection of their Canadian possessions. The English generals, having now a clear field of operation before them, laid down the plan of a single campaign which might be described as a romantic dream, if success had not finally justified the daring conception. The avowed object of this great enterprise was the conquest of Canada. Brigadier-general Wolfe, a man young in the service, but moulded by nature for a hero, was appointed to take the command of a large body of forces destined for the siege of Quebec, the capital of the French province. A second portion of the army, commanded by general Amherst, was to attempt the reduction of Fort Ticonderago at Crown Point; then, crossing Lake Champlain, and proceeding by the Richelieu and the St. Lawrence, to join Wolfe under the batteries of Quebec. A third section, committed to brigadier-general Prideaux, strengthened by a numerous body of Indian auxiliaries, was to invest Niagara; then, embarking on Lake Ontario, to lay siege to Montreal, seated in the waves of the St. Lawrence, and, having reduced that strong-hold, to meet the rest of the army at the grand rendezvous before the capital. Such was the plan of the campaign, magnificent in design, and demanding the ablest qualities of judgment and resolution to carry it into effect.

General Amherst moved forward on his expedition in the beginning of July. The French, either struck by panic, or contemplating some ulterior design, retired before him as he advanced, evacuating Ticonderago and Crown Point in succession, and taking refuge in the Tete-aux-Noix, at the northern extremity of Lake

Champlain. Several attempts were made to follow them; but the stormy season had set in, and general Amherst was compelled to take up his winter quarters at the last fort he had seized. In the meanwhile, Niagara had capitulated; but a combination of insurmountable obstacles rendered it necessary to suspend the projected movement upon Montreal. These two portions of the army, therefore, were winter-bound on their way to Quebec; and Wolfe was left, single-handed, to prosecute an enterprise which, even to him, seemed hopeless.

Quebec is built at the confluence of the St. Lawrence and the St. Charles, on the summit of a precipitous rock, which, stretching westward parallel with the former river, renders the town on that side inaccessible. On the opposite side it is protected by the rough tide of the St. Charles, roaring over broken channels, with its borders intersected by numberless ravines. Powerful fortifications surround the whole, and present an impregnable aspect, from whatever point of view the elevated citadel is approached. When Wolfe found his army, wasted by sickness and dispirited by toils, floating in their ships before this isolated battery, he became at once sensible of the dangers of his situation. The French general, M. de Montcalm, well acquainted with the natural advantages of the position, had taken up his post with 10,000 men on the left bank of the St. Charles, their encampments extending to the river Montmorenci to the east, and covered in the rear with impassable forests. Wolfe saw that unless the enemy could be brought to a decisive engagement, nothing was left but ruin. Nor were these the only difficulties against which he had to contend. The jealousies of some of his officers exposed him to embarrassments of another kind. Townshend, the third in command, who thought he ought to have been first, thwarted his plans, and endeavoured to retard his operations. Such conduct was characteristic of the individual who afterwards sought to defraud him of the honours of victory. Wolfe

desponded, but did not despair. He resolved to attack the enemy in the entrenchments near the falls of Montmorenci. Landing under cover of the cannon of the ships of war, the grenadiers rushed impetuously to the charge, contrary to express orders not to advance until the whole army was formed. Checked by the steady fire of the enemy, they were thrown into confusion; but Wolfe rallied them at the head of the remaining brigades, and made a fresh assault. The plan of the battle, however, was effectually frustrated; and it was not without great difficulty and considerable loss that they ultimately effected their retreat to the island of Orleans.

The despatches of general Wolfe at this period communicated a deep gloom to the people of England. Without exaggerating the misfortunes that had already occurred, or the still greater calamities that seemed to lie before him, he drew such a picture of dilemmas that the undertaking was already looked upon as a total failure. No succours had arrived, nor was there any prospect of them; provisions, to the amount of twenty-two shiploads, escaping the vigilance of the English fleet, had been conveyed into the town; and the besieging army were reduced to nearly half the complement of the besieged. "We have," said Wolfe in one of his despatches, remarkable for perspicuity and felicity of style, "almost the whole force of Canada to oppose. In such a choice of difficulties I own myself at a loss how to determine. The affairs of Great Britain I know to require the most vigorous measures; but the courage of a handful of brave men should be exerted only where there is some hope of a favourable event. However, you may be assured that the small part of the campaign which remains shall be employed, as far as I am able, for the honour of his majesty, and the interest of the nation." The public did not know how to interpret such language as this, and were doubtful whether he meant to prepare the way for the abandonment of the siege, or to lay the foundation, in the extreme hopeless-

ness of the case, for some extraordinary act of heroism. But despondency prevailed; and intelligence was daily expected of the total destruction of the "handful of brave men" under the walls of Quebec.

Wolfe's anxieties were increased by illness—a painful disease, and a fever produced by the enervating heats of August. Still his spirit was strong and watchful, and he resolved upon a final effort, so bold and hazardous that he could not have failed and lived. This was to land his troops on the bank of the river; to scale the heights, generally supposed to be inaccessible; and to secure the grounds on the summit at the back of the town, where the artificial fortifications were slight. This desperate project was carried into execution with the most perfect precision. In order to deceive the enemy, the admiral moved up the river several leagues beyond the place fixed upon for disembarkation; and when night arrived he dropped noiselessly down the current. At one o'clock in the morning they effected the landing, but found themselves beyond the spot originally destined for the enterprsie. A dark and almost perpendicular precipice rose above them, presenting so impracticable a surface that the French had left only 150 men to defend it. The pace of the sentinels, mingled with the low murmur of the waters, could be distinctly heard; but the besiegers, treading stealthily to the base of the lofty crag, in which no trace of pathway could be discovered, commenced the laborious ascent, one by one, clambering up by branches of trees, and tufts of grass, which grew in the clefts that scarred the rugged face of the rock. As they increased in number, the rustling attracted the attention of the guards above, who gathering at the edge of the precipice fired down at random. Their shots were returned with more enthusiasm than prudence; but, fortunately, the French picquet became possessed with a vague feeling of terror at finding their vollies answered from the dark abyss at their feet, and fled in consternation, leaving their captain alone, wounded but undaunted. As the men

reached the summit in tumultuous exultation, this valiant soldier fired at one of the officers, refusing to accept quarter; but, instead of being cut down, his generous adversaries, honouring his courage, punished him only by sending him to the hospital. At daybreak the British soldiers were in possession of the eminence, formed in order of battle.

When it was reported to Montcalm that the English troops were actually drawn up on the heights of Abraham, his astonishment deprived him of all power of collecting his thoughts: at first he utterly disbelieved it; but there was no time for speculation. Nothing but an immediate engagement could save the town; and, scorning their reduced numbers, he believed he had only to appear to make sure of victory. "S'il faut donc combattre," was his exclamation, "je vais les ecraser." Abandoning his strong entrenchments, he advanced to the attack, after lining the bushes with detachments of Indians. The British troops, strictly observing the cautious instructions they had previously received, reserved their fire until a favourable moment occurred to pour it with deadly effect upon the enemy. The French were quickly thrown into disorder. Montcalm, endeavouring to restore them, was killed upon the spot. In the ardour of the contest Wolfe received a wound upon the head: covering it with his handkerchief, he endeavoured to conceal it from his soldiers. In a few moments after, a second ball struck him in the body; this, too, he endured without betraying it to those around him. A third ball entered his breast; pain and loss of blood now compelled him to retire. He was carried behind the ranks; but his solicitude was for the battle, not for himself. Hearing loud cries of "They fly! they fly!" he inquired "Who flies?" His sight was dim—he could see no more. Being informed that it was the French, he said, "Then I die content!" and falling back in the arms of his supporters, he expired. It was the death of a hero. Victory wept over his immature grave.

The commanders on both sides were killed; and, by a

remarkable coincidence, the seconds in command were wounded. The loss of the English was slight, for the whole engagement did not continue more than half an hour; the French ranks having been broken early, which produced a premature and precipitate retreat. The town was still strongly garrisoned, and provided with the means of a vigorous defence; but a panic had spread among the troops, and at the end of five days the governor capitulated, and the shattered remains of the grand army of Canada retired in disorder to Montreal.

The rejoicings in England, mixed with deep and universal sympathy for the loss of Wolfe, upon this occasion exceeded all former celebrations. The whole year was one unvaried round of triumphs, and every day brought intelligence of some new miracle of arms. "Our bells," said lord Orford, "are worn threadbare with ringing for victories." *

Occasional interruptions, however, to this torrent of success served usefully to abate the popular delirium. The campaign in Germany was chequered with a few reverses, coming interstitially between the brilliant achievements of the allies over the French. Early in the spring the motions of the troops exhibited impatience for the commencement of hostilities, and several detached corps undertook small enterprises on their own account before the general preparations for the resumption of the war were completed. On one of these occasions the hereditary prince made three entire battalions prisoners of war. This was considered an auspicious opening of the campaign. But prince Ferdinand of Brunswick was not so fortunate. Failing in his design of driving the enemy from Frankfort before the arrival of their reinforcements, he made three attempts to dislodge marshal Broglio from Bergen, and was repulsed each time with loss. Compelled to retrace the ground to his former cantonments, he fought flying; and, with admirable address, threw such difficulties in the way of the victors that, although they possessed themselves of all the places

* Letter to George Montagu.

through which he passed, they were unable to gain any other advantage over him than that which he did not venture to dispute. Cassel, Gottingen, Lipstadt, Munster, and Minden were reduced in succession; and Hanover seemed once more on the point of falling into their hands. The regency, taking the alarm, packed up the archives of the electorate, and sent them, with other valuables, to Stade, in order that they should be shipped for England; and the prince, finding no other means left to oppose the advance of the enemy, determined to give them battle. He accordingly drew up in a strong position near Minden; and the French, flushed with recent conquests, charged his lines with impetuosity. The prince, however, had made so skilful a disposition of the troops that they met the tumultuous assault with firmness, and rapidly turned the fortune of the day. At this critical moment, after fighting from daybreak until noon, the French fell into disorder, and the prince sent orders to lord George Sackville to bring up the English cavalry: soon after, the orders were repeated, slightly varied as to the direction to be taken. Lord George, whose personal courage was somewhat problematical, and whose haughty and unaccommodating temper made him universally disliked, either felt or affected to be confused by these orders; and before he executed them he thought proper to apply to the prince for a more explicit explanation of his desire. In the meanwhile the French were routed at all points; and so much time was lost by the strange delay of lord George Sackville, that when the cavalry at last arrived the battle was over.

The conduct of lord George Sackville on this occasion did not escape the vigilant notice of the commander-in-chief. Such, however, was his lordship's indifference to contempt, or effrontery in outfacing it, that he did not hesitate to join the general officers at prince Ferdinand's table after the engagement. "Voila cet homme," exclaimed the prince to those about him, "autant à son aise comme s'il avoit fait des merveilles!" The next

day he gave his lordship to understand that his silence was not indemnity: that he left him to the judgment of England. His lordship could not pretend to misunderstand this hint, as he did the orders conveyed by the aides-de-camp. He solicited permission to resign. It was granted at once, and he returned home to encounter odium from the people, and disgrace from the king.

The French lost in this engagement 10,000 men, forty-three pieces of cannon, a great number of colours and standards, with the equipage and cabinet of the general, containing papers of consequence. The immediate result was the flight of the remnant of the army, the surrender of Minden, and the degradation of the general, whose commission was transferred to the duc de Broglie. On the same day another corps was defeated at Coveldt by the hereditary prince. The only place in Westphalia now remaining in the possession of the French was the city of Munster; and if prince Ferdinand had not been suddenly required in Saxony with a large body of troops to assist the king of Prussia, struggling with indomitable resolution against formidable odds, the campaign would probably have terminated by the expulsion of the invaders beyond the Rhine.

On the meeting of parliament in October, these events formed a subject of universal congratulation. Euloguims were profusely lavished upon the ministers, the generals, and the admirals. Formerly battles were fought by diplomatists, but now they were won by grape-shot and bomb-shells. The mouth of the cannon was more eloquent than that of Horace Walpole or Chesterfield. The iron lips were more persuasive than the lips clustered with bees, that shed their honey on the Kendalls and the Suffolks, who in the times of intrigue had ruled the destinies of the country. Pitt disclaimed any special praise for himself, and boasted of the solidity of the administration. Success, he declared, had produced unanimity, not unanimity success. But he demanded more troops and more money. Prince Ferdinand had 60,000 men ready for the next campaign; but France

would have 100,000. The reduction of Quebec and the battle of Minden, a monument to Wolfe, and the naval victories, threw the house into the requisite intoxication to grant any thing that was asked. Besides, profuse expenditure was the best economy. The war had cost much, but only 1500 men had fallen in America. France was on the eve of bankruptcy, and another campaign would extinguish her. His majesty, it was true, had expressed himself in the speech from the throne desirous to put a stop to the effusion of blood; but the eloquence of the minister in a funeral oration upon the hero of Quebec, and in still grander tributes to the surviving heroes of the day, who were loaded with honours and posts of danger, turned the tide in favour of glory. The members of the commons were excited by as exuberant a spirit of military ardour as if they had themselves scaled the heights of Abraham; and they voted the supplies in proportion. The number of men in the British pay, including the militia, who supplied the place of the standing army at home, amounted to 175,000, and supplies for the service of the year were cheerfully granted to the unparalleled extent of 15,000,000*l.* sterling. The trumpet of Fame was made of gold!

The only incident of the session, apart from these absorbing topics, to which any special interest can be attached, was a bill for rendering effectual the Parliamentary Qualification Act, which was passed in the reign of queen Anne, and which had been constantly and notoriously violated from that time to the present. The act was an invention of the tories to keep the representation of the country in the hands of the landed interest, and required that members of parliament should possess a certain amount of freehold property to render them eligible to their seats. The obvious absurdity of the principle on which this bill was founded—making property the test of fitness—had long been apparent to the country; but the ease with which it was evaded rendered the people in a great degree indifferent to its existence. Nothing more was necessary than to transfer an estate

for a few hours to the popular candidate, and he was carried into parliament on a piece of waste paper; for as the bill did not require that he should possess property while he sat in the house, but merely at the moment of his election, so the trustee of a thousand acres, who received the suffrages of a populous constituency, might be invested with the power of making laws for seven years, without really holding the rent-roll of a foot of earth. The act was monstrous in principle, and ridiculous in operation; and the improvement made upon it in this session, merely enlarged its original absurdity. By the new act, every person elected a member of the house of commons was compelled to deliver in a schedule of his lands to the speaker of the house. This provision only gave a little more trouble to individuals who evaded the law, without increasing the security against its evasion.

The rumour of a French invasion had produced a run upon the banks in Ireland; but it gave occasion to still more serious consequences. Thurot's attempt at Carrickfergus discovered the necessity of raising troops in the country for its defence. The people had for some time exhibited considerable uneasiness on the subject of a union with England, a measure which they had reason to suspect was secretly contemplated by the government. The order for increasing the local forces was naturally enough regarded as a part of the machinery by which this obnoxious design was to be carried into effect, and it was resisted by clamours in the provinces and by an *emeute* in Dublin. The mob collected at the doors of the house of commons, seized on the members who were supposed to be in the English interest, and compelled them to take an oath that they would vote against the union. In some instances they proceeded to violence, and in others they mingled a grotesque humour with their patriotic rage. They pulled out sir Thomas Prendergast by the nose, and rolled him in the kennel; and then, imagining that their proceedings required a legal sanction, they stopped the chief justice, and made him administer the oath to the lord chancellor. They at-

tempted to hang the lord-lieutenant's private secretary; and forcing their way into the house of lords, placed an old woman on the throne, supplying her liberally with pipes and tobacco. This dangerous outbreak was suppressed by a gentle deception. Troopers rode out amongst the populace without effect:—a pledge was given that the union would be abandoned, and the discontent was appeased. The episode is an epitome of the Irish character.

Voltaire was of opinion that royal families ought to be treated with implicit decorum in the pages of history. If the maxim be correct, royal deaths are strictly historical. Three are recorded in the annals of the present year.

Anne, princess-royal of England, and dowager of Orange, died on the 12th of January, at the age of fifty. She was the eldest daughter of the king, and gouvernante of the republic during the minority of her son. The closing days of her life were zealously employed in endeavouring to prevent a rupture between England and Holland, the latter country being incensed at the frequent seizure of Dutch vessels freighted with French goods. The ties of blood and marriage were not forgotten in the political obligations of her station.

In the autumn the lady Elizabeth of England died, in her eighteenth year. She was the second daughter of Frederic prince of Wales; had the reputation of a quick capacity; but was deformed in person, and homely in manners.

Ferdinand, king of Spain, died about the same time. He was a man of weak intellect, and was latterly believed to be afflicted with mental derangement. The cause of this melancholy calamity was generally attributed to the administration of potent drugs by his mother-in-law, Elizabeth-Farnese, the queen-dowager, who wanted to secure the throne for her own son, as Ferdinand had no issue by his marriage. Such a suspicion could have originated only in the prevailing ignorance of the pathology of insanity. Drugs might have pro-

duced barrenness; but, unless they were administered to an excess that could not escape detection, their effect upon the mind of the king must have been merely temporary. His aberration admits of a more philosophical conclusion. His father was similarly disturbed in his understanding. The malady was hereditary.

1760. The campaigns in America and Germany were resumed in the ensuing year with an ardour commensurate to the success that had hitherto rewarded the devotion of the troops. Fresh triumphs attended the British arms in all quarters of the globe where they were engaged; and the victories of Clive at Plassey, and of Coote in the Carnatic, extended the sovereignty of England over remoter dominions in the distant empire of the East.

In Germany the war, as usual, fluctuated; and although the ultimate advantage was on the side of the allies, it was not won without serious losses. The withdrawal of 12,000 men from the army of prince Ferdinand for the service of the king of Prussia materially weakened the strength of that general, without contributing very effectually to the protection of the king. The operations of the campaign may be exhibited briefly in three divisions:—the king of Prussia in Saxony and Silesia; the hereditary prince skirmishing in the neighbourhood of the Lower Rhine; and prince Ferdinand hovering round the French in Westphalia, and on the borders of Hanover.

The king of Prussia entrenched himself strongly between the Elbe and the Multa, commanding the whole of Saxony; Silesia was defended by his brother, prince Henry; while general Fouquet, maintaining a correspondence with the latter, was posted near Glatz. On the other side, marshal Daun and general Laudohn hung upon the Prussians; the former in a well-fortified camp, and the latter moving about on the skirts of the dispersed army. The first movement was a battle between Laudohn and Fouquet, in which the former was completely successful; taking Fouquet prisoner, and seizing upon the town of Glatz, which contained a valuable magazine

of military stores. From thence he advanced upon Breslau; but prince Henry, by a rapid march, came to its relief, forcing Laudohn to abandon the siege, but not until he had laid the city in ashes by a furious bombardment. The king, more enterprising than cautious, took advantage of this occupation of the enemy's troops; and, after a brilliant manœuvre, by which he diverted marshal Daun upon a false course, suddenly appeared before the walls of Dresden. Daun, however, quickly overtook him, and forced him to abandon the siege. The next object was to effect a junction with the prince, for which purpose he advanced into Silesia. At Lignitz, the Austrians attempted to intercept him. He was surrounded on all sides; but falling upon the forces under the command of Laudohn, he obtained a rapid victory before the remaining troops could come up, and cut his passage to Breslau, where he joined the prince. Uniting their strength they rescued Schweidnitz, then closely invested by Daun. But in the meanwhile Berlin had surrendered to a detachment of Russians and Austrians. Dangers thickened round the king, but were dispersed as fast as they crowded upon him. Collecting his whole forces, he marched to the relief of his capital. The imperialists, having intelligence of his approach, contented themselves with brutal excesses, plunder, and debauchery; then, taking different routes, evacuated the city. The entire Prussian army now amounted to about 80,000; that of the enemy to at least 100,000. Notwithstanding this inferiority, the king determined to risk a battle; and giving his troops to understand that it was a final effort, and that they had no alternative but to conquer or die, he advanced impetuously upon the Austrians, posted in great strength at Torgau. At the first charge the enemy were thrown into confusion; and, following up his advantage with desperate intrepidity, the king succeeded before nightfall in putting them to the rout. The darkness favoured their retreat, and they effected their escape across the Elbe in good order. By this victory the whole of Saxony was gained, except

Dresden. But it was purchased at an enormous cost. The loss of the Prussians was computed at 13,000 men. The loss of the Austrians was not less; and they left four generals, 216 officers, and 8000 privates prisoners on the field. In consequence of this defeat the imperialists abandoned Silesia, and retired into Franconia; and as winter was approaching, which the king used to call his best auxiliary, the Russians and Swedes relinquished the campaign, and went into their old cantonments. The king gained nothing by these engagements; he was nearly in the same situation as at the commencement of hostilities: his great military abilities had saved his possessions, but at the same time had impoverished them, and needlessly prolonged a ruinous war.

The exploits of the hereditary prince were more chivalric than important. Early in the spring he met with a mortifying repulse at Corback, which he soon afterwards retrieved at Exdorf, where, with his characteristic energy, he took five whole battalions prisoners, including the commander, with their arms, baggage, and artillery. His next adventure was at the little antique city of Cleves, which being weakly garrisoned, surrendered at discretion; then, pushing onwards, he laid siege to Wesel, but was repulsed with a severe loss. An engagement subsequently took place at Campen, in which he sustained so signal a defeat that he repassed the river precipitately, and joined the main army. In these conflicts he received several wounds, which he endured with heroism; and, after lingering for a few weeks in torture, he expired.

Prince Ferdinand's campaign was distinguished by less variety, but was more conclusive in its results. A reserve of the French army having crossed the Dymel, to cut off the communication of the allies with Westphalia, the prince broke up his camp and followed them. He found them near the village of Warbourg, and made so masterly a disposition of his troops that he completely surrounded them in front, flank, and rear. The French retreated precipitately, and suffered severely

in the retreat from the English cavalry, commanded by lord Grandby. By this movement, however, the landgraviate of Hesse was exposed to marshal Broglio, who rapidly reduced Cassel, Minden, Gottingen, and Elmbeck, and was once more on the eve of regaining possession of Hanover. Nor could any steps be taken this season to arrest his progress, for the allies had already retired into their winter quarters.

In America, the war was brought to a triumphant conclusion, while these interruptions and doubtful successes retarded the progress of the allied arms in Europe. General Murray had been appointed governor of Quebec; and as the fleet had been compelled to retire at the approach of the frost, he adopted all the precautions that prudence could suggest for the defence of the city. The event proved that his caution was not superfluous. M. Levi, who had succeeded Montcalm, assembled a body of French, Canadians, and Indians, to the number of 10,000; and, marching from Montreal in the month of April, encamped under the walls of Quebec, hoping to effect the conquest before succours could be received from England. General Murray, although his force was inferior, having scarcely 7000 men at his command, marched out and attacked the besiegers; but was defeated, with the loss of his cannon, effecting his retreat into the citadel with considerable difficulty. Levi, encouraged by this piece of good fortune, immediately invested the city by sea and land. On the 9th of May, however, lord Colville arrived with two frigates; entered the river, and destroyed the French armament, consisting of six frigates. Levi witnessed this defeat from the opposite heights, and, perceiving the hopelessness of his situation, broke up his camp, and retreated in confusion. This movement was so precipitate, that his provisions and artillery fell into the hands of the British. There now remained in possession of the French only the single fortress of Montreal. Here, the marquis de Vaudreuil, governor-general of the province, collected all his magazines, and waited the approach of general

Amherst, who had already crossed Lake Ontario, and reduced Isle Royale, which commands the entrance of the St. Lawrence. Passing the cataracts with inconsiderable loss, he was joined by general Murray at the head of his disposable force, and further strengthened by colonel Haviland, who had taken the Isle aux Noix, and advanced to the south bank of the river opposite to Montreal. Finding himself completely invested, and and having no expectation of relief, the marquis de Vaudreuil capitulated, and surrendered the garrison prisoners of war. This bloodless victory completed the conquest of Canada — the most important accession to crown of England that had been made throughout a long and costly war.

This glorious event transported the nation with joy, and was hailed with appropriate congratulations. Parliament had become every session more indifferent to the expenses of these triumphant campaigns, and Pitt's boast that his supplies had doubled the expense of any year of queen Anne's reign was received with acclamations. Upwards of 16,000,000*l.* were voted for the present year.

In the midst of the ardour of victory, lord George Sackville demanded a court-martial to inquire into his conduct at the battle of Minden. He waited until the officers had returned from Germany, that they might be present at the investigation. Some legal doubts were entertained as to whether he was amenable to such a tribunal, under the peculiar circumstances of his case; and his friends, of whom he had but few, endeavoured to take advantage of them to arrest the disgrace that hung over him. It was urged that the disobedience of orders of which he was accused had taken place under the command of a foreign general, and could not, therefore, be recognized by an English court; and that as he had already resigned his commission, he was no longer subject to military law. But he pertinaciously insisted upon a trial; and, as the opinion of the law officers of the crown were in favour of the legality of

the proceeding, his demand was complied with. His lordship's bearing throughout the inquiry was strangely contrasted with his indecision on the field of battle; he browbeat the witnesses, insulted his judges, and dictated peremptorily upon every point that elicited discussion; and it was acutely observed that an instant of such resolution at Minden would have established his character for ever. The sentence surprised nobody except the accused, who believed to the last that the superiority of his talents would extricate him from the difficulty in which his temper or his cowardice had involved him. He was pronounced guilty of having disobeyed prince Ferdinand's orders, and declared unfit to serve his majesty in any capacity whatever.

This decision was promptly confirmed by the king, who increased its severity by striking out the name of lord George Sackville with his own hand from the list of privy councillors, forbidding him at the same time to appear at court, and causing the lord chamberlain to notify the prohibition to the prince and princess dowager of Wales. His witnesses, friends, and servants were treated with similar severity, and he passed into oblivion covered with universal contempt.

With this year the reign of George II. closed. Observing his usual system, which pervaded all his actions, he rose at six o'clock on the morning of the 25th of October, and drank chocolate, his morning beverage. At a quarter past seven, he retired to a private chamber; and shortly afterwards his German valet, hearing a noise, ran into the room, and found his majesty lying bleeding and senseless on the floor. He had fallen against a bureau in an aplopetic fit, and cut his face. Recovering slightly, he desired to see the princess Amelia. She was immediately sent for; but when she reached the apartment his majesty was dead.

The character of George II. has been sufficiently exhibited through the vicissitudes of a reign which, expensive as it was to England, increased her power to a greater height than ever it had attained before. His

German prejudices marred his desire to render useful services to England; but the vigorous administration which was forced upon him in the latter part of his life redeemed the early error of his hereditary predilections. His predominant passions were Hanover and money; Pitt curbed the one, his mistresses made some successful assaults upon the other. He nearly lost Hanover, but he died rich. His policy out of England was narrow, weak, and profligate; but in England it was just, tolerant, and frequently liberal. The executive power was wielded with equity and mildness, and no attempts were made to trespass upon the constitution. In all other respects George II. exhibited few traits to command the admiration of posterity. Capable of the meanest dissimulation, he betrayed the honour of the duke of Cumberland, but attempted to repair it by remembering him handsomely in his will. His understanding was originally circumscribed, and he took no pains to enlarge it. He was utterly destitute of all taste for literature or the arts; choleric in temper; obstinate in opinion; and the slave of inveterate prejudices. It was not surprising to find strong superstition grafted upon such qualities; and it is confidently affirmed that he believed in vampires.

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